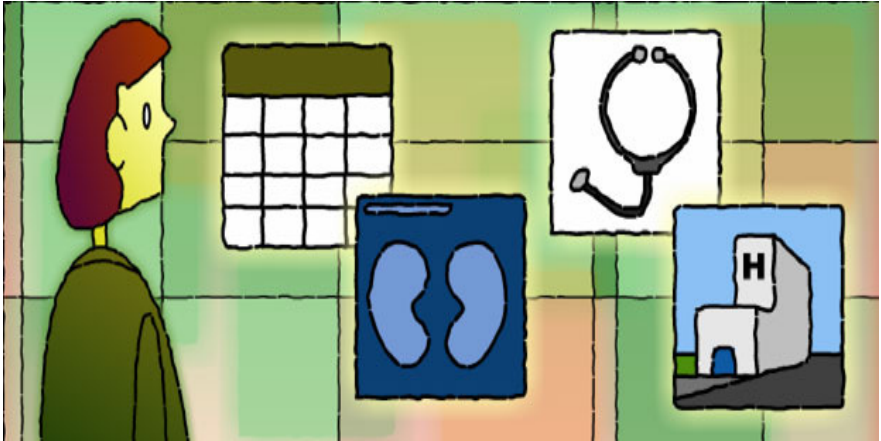




finding
out about.....

kidneys,

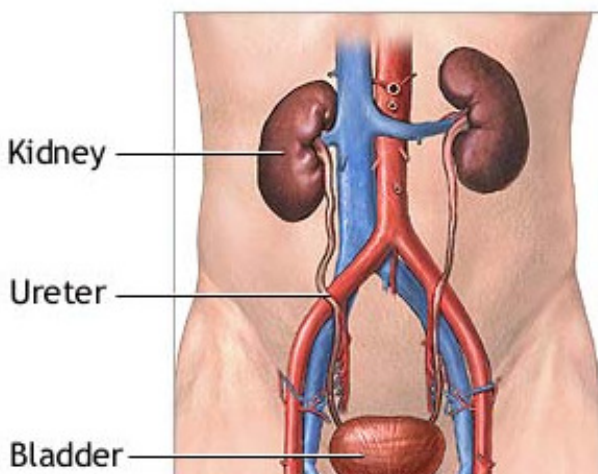


**kidney failure
and dialysis**

What kidneys do and why they are important

Your two kidneys are vital organs that keep your blood clean and chemically balanced.

Your kidneys are bean-shaped organs, each about the size of your fist. They are located near the middle of your back, just below the rib cage.



This is what your kidneys look like underneath the skin.

Kidneys get rid of water, wastes and other things the body does not need. The wastes in your blood come from normal body activity and

from the food you eat.

Your body uses the food for energy and self-repair.

After your body has taken what it needs from the food, wastes are sent to the blood.

Blood flows to all parts of the body through the veins and arteries.

The heart pumps the blood round and round the body 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As the blood passes through the kidneys, they filter out wastes and make urine. Urine is water with waste in it.

From the kidneys the urine flows to the bladder.

The bladder is the brown looking balloon at the bottom of the picture.

Your bladder stores urine until you go to the bathroom.

But, unfortunately ...

Not all kidneys work perfectly.

Things can go wrong with all parts of the body.

This can happen to the kidneys too because of an illness such as diabetes.

Kidney disease can happen very slowly without anyone noticing.

When someone's kidneys don't work very well for a long time, the little filters inside the kidneys can become damaged.

This means the kidneys cannot remove wastes properly.

Over time, the kidneys slow down and gradually more and more of the wastes stay inside.

The body fills up with the extra fluid and wastes that would normally be removed by the kidneys.

This can make you sick.

If the damage becomes really bad and the kidneys can't get better, it is called "kidney failure".

People cannot live without having their blood cleaned.

When kidneys have failed, a treatment called dialysis can take over the job of filtering and cleaning the blood.

People who have dialysis treatment for their kidney failure can live for many years even if their kidneys don't work.

Dialysis, what's that?

Dialysis is an artificial way of filtering the blood, that does the work of the kidneys.

It's not as good as "real" kidneys, but it does a pretty good job of helping people live active and well.

It's also not as easy as having your own kidneys. You need to do things to make the filtering and cleaning happen and it takes time.

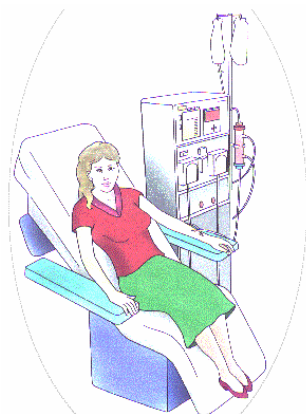
There are two kinds of dialysis.

One is called **haemodialysis** (haemo means blood).
With this treatment the filtering happens outside the body.

The other is called **peritoneal dialysis**.
With this treatment, the filtering happens inside the body.

| | |
|---|--|
| haemodialysis | peritoneal dialysis |
| replaces “real” kidneys outside the body | replaces “real” kidneys inside the body |

Haemodialysis uses a dialysis machine (also called kidney machine) to filter the blood outside the body.



When someone “goes on the machine”, tubes are attached to a vein in their arm. Through these tubes the blood flows to a filter attached to the dialysis machine and back again into the body. The blood goes round and round through the filter, just like it does through “real” kidneys.

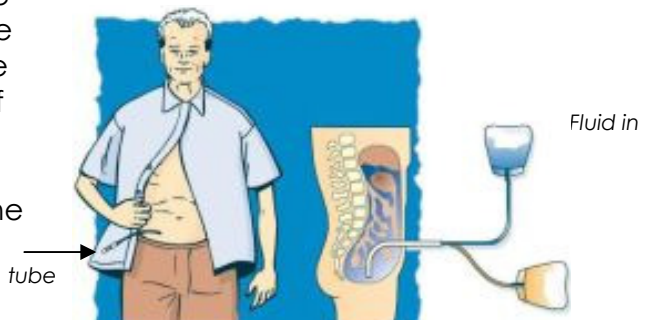
This filter (or dialyser) cleans the blood and removes the water and waste the “real” kidneys can no longer manage. The fluid made by the filter goes directly down the drain. Most people use haemodialysis three times a week. They sit in a chair connected to the machine for four or five hours each time. During this time the tubes carry the blood in and out of their body and through the dialyser. When they are finished, all the blood is put back inside the body and the person is now “off dialysis”. When they are not on the machine, they can go about their daily lives as usual. Haemodialysis is best done in the person’s home where they can do the dialysis themselves. If they are not well enough for that, haemodialysis can be done in a dialysis unit at a hospital.

With Peritoneal dialysis the filtering is done inside the body.

Dialysis (blood cleaning) fluid is run from a bag through a tube into the abdomen (the belly, or tummy), as shown in the picture.

Once the bag is empty, the tube is disconnected and the person can go about their daily life as usual.

Meanwhile, inside the body, the lining of the abdomen acts as the filter, doing the job of “real” kidneys. The lining of the abdomen is called the “peritoneal membrane”.



Inside the body it forms a kind of bag.

The bag encloses several of the body's organs, such as the bowel, liver and stomach.

The blood flows naturally through the lining of the abdomen. Waste and water pass from the blood into the dialysis fluid inside.

Several times a day the 'old' fluid with waste and water in it is drained out and replaced with fresh fluid.

The old fluid goes down the toilet.

This dialysis is done every day of the week, four or five times a day.

The person "doing a bag change" (draining out the old fluid and draining in new fluid) is only connected to a set of tubes and bags for 20-40 minutes at these times.

Because peritoneal dialysis does not need a machine, bag changes can be done almost anywhere.

People take care of their own peritoneal dialysis at home.

Is dialysis forever?

When kidneys have failed, dialysis must go on for the rest of the person's life but in some cases, a person can get a new kidney.

This is called a **kidney transplant**, which means an operation to have someone else's healthy kidney put inside their body so that they no longer need dialysis.

**Not everyone can have a kidney transplant.
Most people will need dialysis for their kidney failure.**

Kidney transplants are explained in another leaflet.

If you need dialysis for your kidney failure, you will find that many things change.

Living with kidney failure is not easy.
But people can adjust and live a good life on dialysis.

If someone you know is on dialysis, here are some really important things you need to know:

- ◆ It's not nice to have kidney failure.
- ◆ Dialysis takes up a lot of time.
- ◆ People with kidney failure don't always feel well.
- ◆ They worry about things and can get grumpy.
- ◆ Having kidney failure may make them angry or sad.
- ◆ People with kidney failure can live for many years.
- ◆ Maybe one day they'll have a transplant and no longer need dialysis.

They are still the same person!

**Kidney failure changes many things,
but someone who has kidney failure is still your
husband, or your mother, or your brother, or
your friend who just happens to be on dialysis.**

**kidney
society**
auckland



Supporting People with Kidney failure and their Families

For information, phone 09 278-1321,
write to P O Box 97-026 Manukau City, Manukau 2241
email adks@extra.co.nz
or call in at 5 Swaffield Road, Papatoetoe, Manukau City
Open weekdays 9-5.