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## Kidney Disease and Prevention

**Kidneys** are bean-shaped organs that filter waste from the blood and produce urine. Their main functions are eliminating toxins and regulating fluid levels/electrolytes through urine production.

**Chronic kidney disease (CKD)** occurs when kidneys are damaged and unable to filter blood properly over an extended period, generally 3 months or longer.

**Risk factors** include diabetes, high blood pressure, family history, certain medications, aging, race/ethnicity, obesity, cardiovascular disease. Early detection is key as it is usually asymptomatic until late stages.

**Treatment** depends on stage but may involve medications, dialysis (kidney filtration absent kidneys), diet/fluid restrictions or kidney transplant. Dialysis sustains life but has side effects.

**Prognosis** is good if diagnosed early before kidney function declines significantly. Transplant offers best outcomes but is limited by organ availability. Risk of death rises exponentially as kidney function declines.

### How to prevent kidney disease

Prevention focuses on managing underlying conditions through healthy lifestyle habits (diet, exercise, not smoking), medication adherence (for diabetes, BP), and early diagnosis through routine blood/urine screening.

**Manage comorbidities:** Strict control of high blood pressure, diabetes, and other conditions associated with increased kidney risk can help preserve function through lifestyle modifications.

**Dietary changes:** Following a kidney-healthy diet lower in sodium, processed foods, and red meats supports renal health. Adequate hydration and nutrient intake through fresh plant-based options promotes kidney wellness.

**Weight control:** Maintaining a healthy BMI reduces stress on the kidneys. Losing excess pounds if overweight or obese lessens workload.

**Limit toxins:** Avoiding excessive alcohol consumption, recreational drugs, smoking/vaping protects kidney tissue from toxic metabolites.

**Medication safety:** Using the lowest effective drug doses, adhering properly to medication schedules, reporting side effects to providers minimizes kidney strain from pharmaceuticals.

**Exercise:** Physical activity increases blood flow and supports overall cardiovascular/metabolic health important for renal function.

**Stress management:** Implementing strategies like yoga, meditation to cope with daily pressures helps prevent aldosterone elevations from chronic high cortisol levels.

**Screening:** High-risk individuals such as those with a family history get regular medical checkups and lab work to spot issues arising early through screening protocols.

Adopting healthy behaviors that uphold kidney wellness comprise the best approach to preventing renal disease whenever possible through lifestyle modifications.