

Kidney disease from high blood pressure and narrowed arteries

Hypertensive nephrosclerosis and ischemic nephropathy

Damaged blood vessels slowly harm the kidneys. Controlling blood pressure and protecting your blood vessels are the keys to treatment.

What are they?

- **Hypertensive nephrosclerosis:** years of high blood pressure make the small blood vessels in the kidneys thick and stiff, and parts of the kidney slowly scar.
- **Ischemic nephropathy:** fatty build-up (plaque), the same process behind heart attacks and strokes, narrows the main arteries to the kidneys. The kidney gets less blood and can shrink and lose function.

The two often happen together, especially in older adults and in people with diabetes, high cholesterol or heart disease, or who smoke.

What you might notice

Usually nothing. These conditions are most often found through blood and urine tests. Clues include blood pressure that stays high on several medicines, or kidney function that drops after starting some blood pressure medicines.

How it's found

- blood test (eGFR) and urine test (ACR)
- kidney ultrasound
- sometimes a special ultrasound or scan of the kidney arteries

How it's treated

- Blood pressure medicines to reach the target you set with your team. Many people need more than one.
- Cholesterol-lowering medicine to slow plaque build-up.
- A procedure to open a narrowed kidney artery helps only a small number of people. Your team will tell you if it might help you.

What you can do

- Check your blood pressure at home after sitting quietly for 5 minutes. Bring your readings to visits.
- Eat less salt (most comes from packaged and restaurant foods), be active, limit alcohol and aim for a healthy weight.
- If you smoke, get help to quit. It's one of the best things you can do for your blood vessels.
- Avoid anti-inflammatory pain relievers (NSAIDs) unless your doctor says they're okay. Your pharmacist can tell you which products contain them.

Call 911 if you have

- chest pain or pressure, or sudden trouble breathing
- signs of a stroke: face drooping, arm weakness, or trouble speaking

Learn more: Kidney Foundation of Canada, kidney.ca. Heart & Stroke, heartandstroke.ca.

General information only. This sheet doesn't replace advice from your own health care team. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.

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