

Acute Kidney Injury



Working together for better patient information

This leaflet is about acute kidney injury which is also known as AKI. The leaflet will give you some facts about your kidneys and AKI. There are some web addresses at the end of the leaflet if you would like more information.



What are the kidneys?

- Your kidneys are small, fist-sized organs
- They are shaped like beans
- They are in the middle of your back, one on each side
- Most people have two kidneys but you may be born with only one

What do your kidneys do?

Your kidneys help to:

- Clean your blood
- Control your blood pressure
- Keep the right amount of fluid in your body
- Make red blood cells
- Control the minerals in your body like potassium and phosphate

What is AKI?

- AKI is short for acute kidney injury
- It means that your kidneys do not work as well as they should
- AKI usually gets better without any long-term problems
- It is not the same as chronic kidney disease (CKD) which does not get better without treatment
- This can affect other parts of your body like your lungs, heart or eyes.

AKI **does not mean** that you have hurt your kidneys in the same way that you can hurt other parts of your body e.g. by falling over or getting hit.

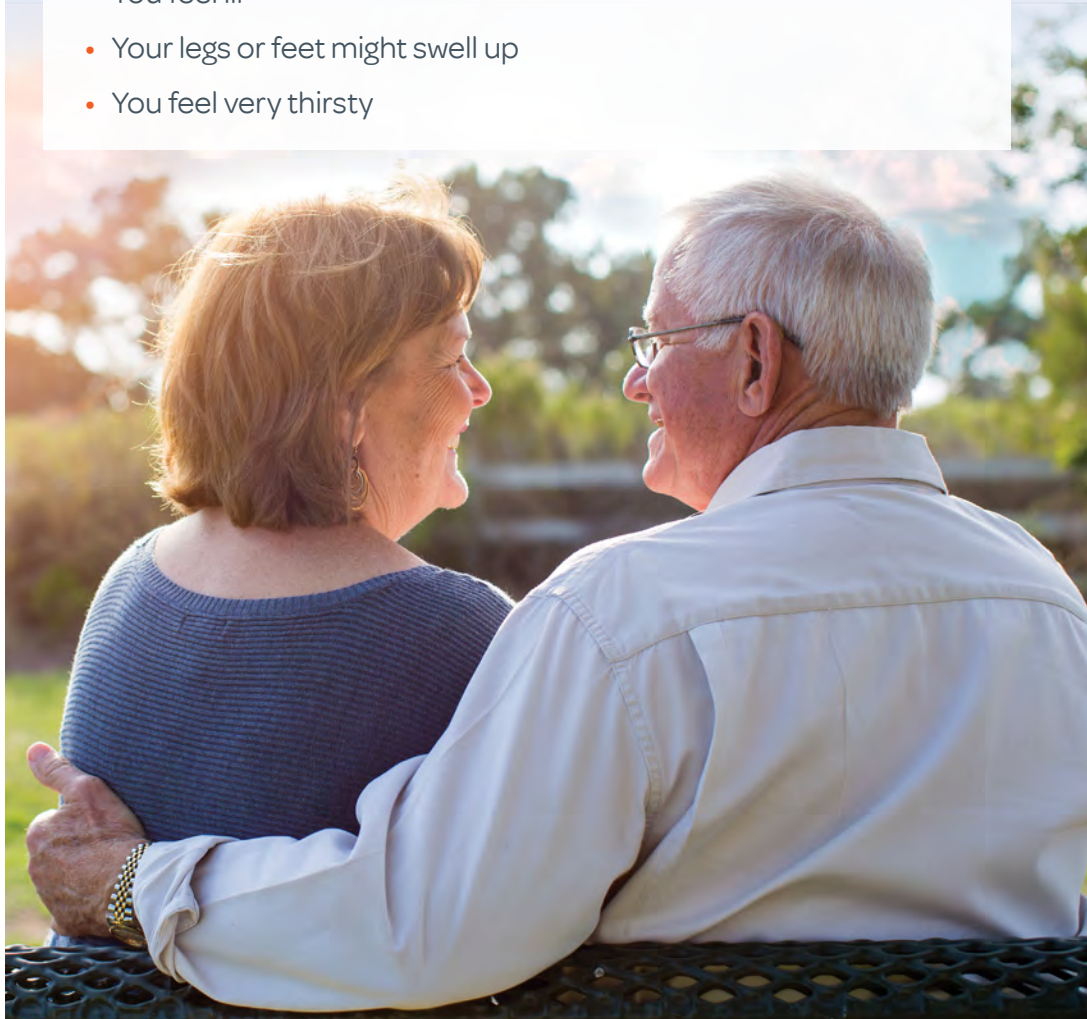


What are the symptoms of AKI?

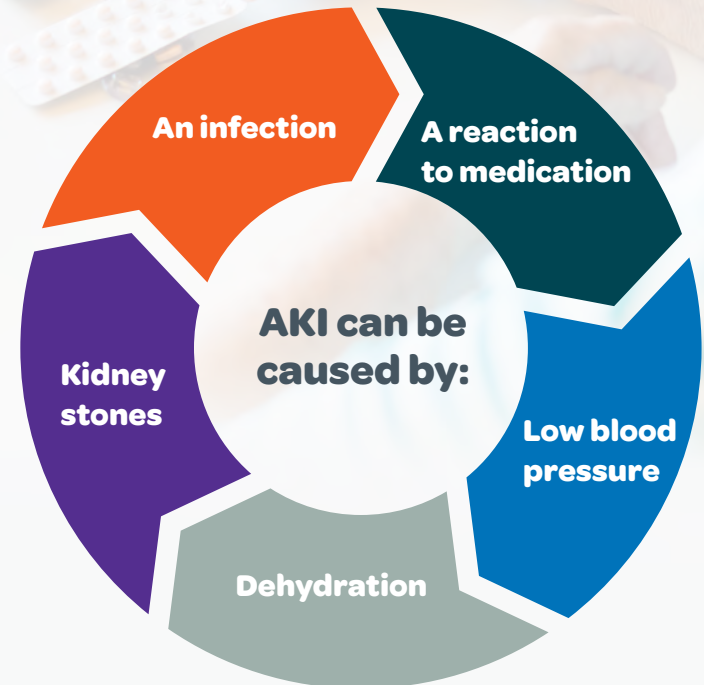
You may not have any symptoms of AKI. It may be found after a blood test.

Or you may have symptoms that your kidneys are not working properly:

- You wee less
- The colour of your wee may change
- You feel ill
- Your legs or feet might swell up
- You feel very thirsty



What causes AKI?



What happens if I am diagnosed with AKI?

It is important you are treated early. You will need to have some blood tests and give a sample of your wee.

You may also:

- Have a scan of your kidneys called an ultrasound
- Have a soft plastic tube called a catheter put into your bladder to drain it
- See a specialist kidney doctor

How will my AKI be treated?

This will depend on how it was caused. AKI may get better with simple treatments like drinking more water.

If you need extra fluids quickly you may need a drip that sends fluid directly into your body through a tube that is put into your arm with a needle.

Your blood pressure will need to be checked regularly.

If your kidneys are very damaged, your blood may need to be cleaned by a machine. This is called dialysis. You may only need to be on this for a short amount of time until your kidneys recover.

What happens next?

Most people make a full recovery from AKI and do not need any long-term treatment

Your doctor will check your blood pressure regularly to make sure you are doing okay.

You should check with your doctor before taking any new medicine in case it could damage your kidneys.




Where can I find out more information?

- Kidney Care UK: Patient information - www.kidneycareuk.org
- Think Kidneys: AKI - www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk/aki/information-for-the-public
- NHS Choices: AKI - www.nhs.uk/conditions/acute-kidney-injury



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