



yes
i
want
to
help
in
the
fight
against
kidney
disease
&
support
kidney
health
australia

DIABETES

how
does
diabetes
affect
the
kidneys?
?

Diabetes is the second most common cause of kidney disease in Australia, except in Aboriginal Australians, where it is the leading cause of kidney disease.

About 25% of people who need dialysis (artificial kidney treatment) or kidney transplantation in Australia have diabetic nephropathy.

Diabetic Nephropathy: This is a kidney condition that occurs in 20–30% of people with diabetes and results in progressive damage to the small filtering units of the kidney (glomeruli). This eventually leads to large amounts of protein in the urine, high blood pressure and declining kidney function. Even when drugs and diet are able to control diabetes, the disease can lead to nephropathy and kidney failure.

There are a number of factors increasing the risk of progressive diabetic kidney disease, including:

- high blood pressure,
- high blood glucose levels (particularly in the early stages of diabetes),
- smoking,
- family history of high blood pressure, and
- family history of diabetic kidney disease.

Damage to blood vessels: Even with the use of injected insulin, people who have had diabetes for some time often suffer from damage to the small blood vessels of the body. The delicate blood vessels in the filters of the kidney (the glomeruli) may be damaged. In the early stage, this damage is demonstrated by small amounts of protein in the urine. At a later stage, so much protein can be lost from the blood that water in the blood moves into the body tissues and causes swelling (oedema). After a number of years, the kidneys' filters can fail completely.

Damage to nerves: Diabetes can also damage the nerves in many parts of the body. When the bladder is affected, it may be difficult to pass urine. If urine builds up in the bladder, the pressure can cause it to flow back into the kidneys and cause scarring.

Infections: Diabetes causes urine to have high sugar content. This encourages growth of bacteria and kidney infections may occur. People with diabetes must take special care to ensure any infections are treated immediately.



For more information about kidney and urinary health, please contact Kidney Health Australia:

Kidney Info Line
freecall 1800 682 531

www.kidney.org.au

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