

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ACUTE KIDNEY INJURY

In the Clinic
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What Is Acute Kidney Injury?

Doctors diagnose acute kidney injury (AKI) when your kidneys stop working properly and the change happens over a few hours or a few days. It can cause a buildup of waste products in your blood and make it hard for your kidneys to balance the fluids in your body. It can lead to serious health problems, such as permanent kidney damage and even death.

AKI usually happens to people who are sick, especially when they are in the hospital. AKI can be a complication of the following conditions:

- Sepsis (a type of infection)
- Shock
- Accidents
- Burns
- Heart attack or other heart disease
- Blockage of the urinary tract
- Infection of the urinary tract
- Surgery
- Dyes for x-rays
- Certain over-the-counter and prescription medicines
- Contact with a poisonous plant or animal
- Severe allergic reaction

What Are the Risk Factors?

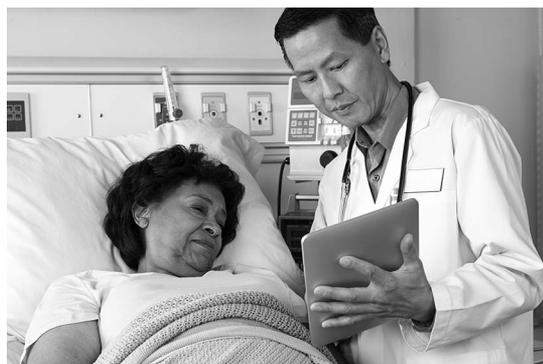
You are more susceptible to AKI if you:

- Are an older adult
- Are female
- Are African American
- Have chronic kidney disease
- Have chronic heart, lung, or liver disease
- Have diabetes
- Have cancer
- Are anemic

What Are the Symptoms?

AKI usually has no symptoms until your kidneys start to fail. Kidney failure means that your kidneys can no longer properly remove waste from your body. These symptoms may occur if you have kidney failure:

- Feeling sleepy
- Feeling sick to your stomach



- Swelling or retaining fluid
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded

How Is It Diagnosed?

- Your doctor will ask you questions about your health history and take blood and urine samples.
- If there is something wrong with your kidneys, you may have an imaging test. This could include an ultrasound.

How Is It Treated?

- Patients with AKI are usually treated in a hospital. Your health care provider will give you intravenous fluids to bring your levels back to normal. You may also take medicines to help balance your fluid levels.
- In more serious cases, you may need dialysis while your kidneys recover. Dialysis filters the waste in your body, just as healthy kidneys do.

Questions for My Doctor

- What caused my AKI?
- Will I need dialysis?
- Will I have permanent damage?
- If I recover, what are the chances I'll get it again in the future?
- Should I eat a special diet?
- Should I avoid any medications?

For More Information



American College of Physicians
Leading Internal Medicine, Improving Lives

National Kidney Foundation

www.kidney.org/atoz/content/AcuteKidneyInjury

Medline Plus

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000501.htm>