



Kidney Q&A

0-3 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program
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Q: What is likely to happen to my health as I get older?

A: As our bodies age, many of us will get new health problems. When you have kidney failure, dialysis can only do so much. It cannot replace everything your kidneys did. Over time, if you don't take care of yourself:

- Changes in body chemicals can make your bones weak, leave certain proteins in your tissues, and harden your blood vessels.
- You may have joint pain or even break bones more easily.
- Large fluid gains can make your heart weaker.
- If your blood vessels are hard, blood flow will be reduced and you could have a stroke or heart attack.

You can lower your risk of these problems by taking some of the steps below—but nobody can avoid aging entirely!

How *I* can protect my health as *I* get older:

- Follow my diet and fluid limits, especially sodium and potassium.
- Cook with heart-healthy oils and eat less saturated fat. Ask my dietitian to help me.
- Add protein to my diet.
- Take the drugs my doctor orders and report any problems they cause.

- Take my phosphate binders with every meal and snack.
- Report all of my symptoms to my doctor or nurse.
- Get my doctor's okay for an exercise program and work up to 30 minutes of exercise every day (start with 5 minutes at a time).
- Get my full dialysis treatments.
- Consider getting more dialysis by doing daily or nocturnal hemodialysis at home or in a center.
- Go to Kidney School™, at www.kidneyschool.org to learn more.
- Visit Home Dialysis Central at www.homedialysis.org to learn more.