



Kidney Q&A

4-12 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program
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www.lifeoptions.org

Q: Will dialysis affect my nerves (the feeling in my hands & feet)?

A: Nerve damage (*neuropathy*), can occur with many health problems. In people with kidney failure, waste products that the kidneys don't remove can cause nerve damage after many years. In people with diabetes, high blood sugar levels can damage nerves. If you have both diabetes and kidney disease, your chances of having nerve damage may be higher.

These may be signs of nerve damage:

- Tingling, burning, or numbness in the hands or feet
- Muscle wasting in the hands and feet
- Nausea, vomiting, or indigestion
- Sexual arousal problems in men or women; erectile problems in men
- Feeling dizzy when changing from sitting to standing
- Becoming sensitive to glare (may be worse at night)

Avoid nerve damage. Good dialysis is one way to help keep your nerves healthy. Longer dialysis treatments or a dialyzer with higher clearance may help. If you have diabetes, good dialysis with good blood sugar control can prevent nerve damage. A kidney transplant can keep nerve damage from getting worse or even improve it in some cases.

What I can do to keep my nerves healthy:

- Get all of the dialysis my doctor prescribes, and more if possible.
- Tell my doctor about any symptoms of neuropathy.
- Keep my blood sugar as close to normal as possible and ask my nurse how to do foot checks each day, if I have diabetes.
- Keep my skin clean and dry, and avoid very hot or cold temperatures.
- Ask my doctor about safe exercises or look at the Life Options booklet on exercise at www.lifeoptions.org.
- Ask my doctor to refer me to a *neurologist* (nerve specialist), who can do nerve tests and prescribe drugs that can help.
- Ask my doctor to refer me for evaluation for kidney transplant.
- Visit module 16 of Kidney School™: *Long-term Effects of Kidney Disease* at www.kidneyschool.org to learn more about neuropathy.