



Kidney

The health of a single kidney after childhood cancer treatment

Background

Our kidneys, which are located in the abdomen, help to get rid of the extra water and waste products from our bodies and they also maintain normal levels of salt and minerals in the body and blood. The kidneys are also involved in controlling blood pressure.

Who is at risk?

After treatment for childhood cancer, some patients have only one kidney remaining (because one has been removed as part of their treatment) or only one kidney that functions normally (because the tumour or the treatment has damaged one kidney). In these situations it is quite possible to lead a normal healthy life, but it is important to take care of your remaining kidney.

How can problems with my only kidney be screened for?

To assess how healthy your kidney is, a number of tests may be performed. These include:

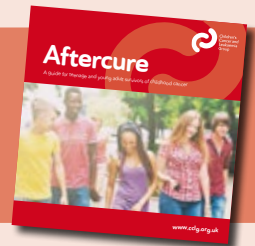
- measuring your blood pressure
- measuring the amount of protein in a urine sample
- blood tests to assess how well your kidney is functioning

How are kidney problems treated?

Many patients do not need treatment if they have signs of early kidney damage. However, they may need follow-up more frequently or referral to a kidney specialist (nephrologist). Your doctor will discuss this with you in more detail.

Published in conjunction with Aftercure: A guide for teenage and young adult survivors of childhood cancer

www.aftercure.org





What can I do to keep my kidney healthy?

- **Drink** plenty of fluids especially in hot weather.
- If you have any **urinary symptoms** (loin or bladder pain, burning on passing urine, blood in urine, needing to pass urine more frequently) see your family doctor.
- **Inform** any doctor or nurse treating you that you only have one kidney, so that they can be especially careful with any drugs that might harm the kidney.
- Do not take any **over the counter drugs** without checking with your pharmacist.
- Have your **urine and blood pressure** checked at least once a year and a **kidney blood test** at least every five years.
- **Eat a healthy, balanced diet** and keep your salt intake low. There are no special dietary requirements for people with a single kidney, but it is sensible to check with your family doctor before starting any special dietary plan.
- **Regular exercise** is good for you as it improves general health and keeps blood pressure lower. If one kidney is removed at a very young age, the remaining kidney grows larger and heavier than normal to compensate for the missing kidney. This may make it more vulnerable to injury and it may be important to protect it. The opinions differ among clinicians as some doctors think it may be best to avoid certain sports or wear protective padding during higher risk exercise. It is important to consider the risks associated with each activity and weigh them up against the benefits. Discuss this further with your family doctor or clinical team at your appointment.
- Consider wearing **medical alert** identification.

Where can I find out more information?

Useful websites with information about living with one kidney include:

- www.kidneyresearchuk.org/health-information/living-with-one-kidney
- www.kidney.org/atoz/content/onekidney
- curesearch.org/Kidney-Health
- kidney.niddk.nih.gov/kudiseases/pubs/solitarykidney

www.aftercure.org

The full range of factsheets for childhood and teenage cancer survivors are available on the Aftercure website in conjunction with CCLG's booklet entitled 'Aftercure: A guide for teenage and young adult survivors of childhood cancer'.



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Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group is a leading children's cancer charity and the UK and Ireland's professional association for those involved in the treatment and care of children with cancer. Each week in the UK and Ireland, more than 30 children are diagnosed. Two out of ten children will not survive their disease.

We bring together childhood cancer professionals to ensure all children receive the best possible treatment and care. We fund and support research into childhood cancers, and we help young patients and their families with our expert, high quality and award-winning information resources.

If you have any comments on this factsheet, please contact us.

CCLG publications on a variety of topics related to children's cancer are available to order or download free of charge from our website.