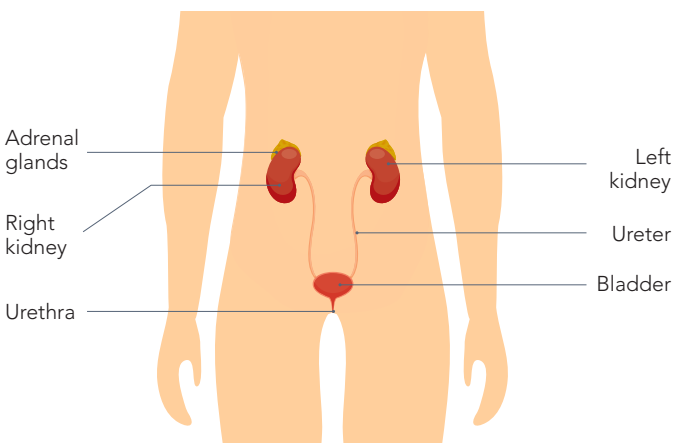


Kidney health

Health information after cancer treatment as a child or teenager

The purpose of this factsheet is to tell you about long-term side effects (called 'late effects') that can happen after having cancer treatment. They can happen soon after treatment has finished or later in life. The medical team at the hospital where you received your treatment or your long-term follow-up team will be able to help you with specific information about which late effects are relevant to you.

Most of us have two kidneys which are located deep inside the tummy. They help to cleanse our blood by getting rid of extra fluids and waste products from our body and transforming them into wee (urine). They also help to keep normal levels of salts and minerals in our body, and are involved in regulating blood pressure.



Who is at risk?

Some cancers or treatments used for childhood cancer can damage your kidneys. These include:

- tumours of the kidney or the adrenal gland
- certain chemotherapy drugs including cisplatin, carboplatin, methotrexate and ifosfamide
- certain antibiotics
- radiotherapy if given to your kidneys or surrounding areas, including radiotherapy to the whole or part of the abdomen, or total body irradiation (TBI) which is sometimes given before a bone marrow/ stem transplant

Other factors that may also increase the risk of kidney problems after chemotherapy or radiotherapy include:

- smoking
- obesity
- high blood pressure
- heart and blood vessel disease
- diabetes mellitus
- family history of kidney disease
- abnormal kidney structure

How do we monitor kidney health?

Kidney damage may cause you to have high blood pressure or to lose large amounts of salt or minerals in your urine. Your doctor will check your blood pressure and kidney function by taking blood and urine samples on a regular basis. If any sign of kidney damage is identified, you may be referred to a kidney specialist for further tests. Some patients may need to take long-term salt or mineral replacement if the levels in their blood are lower than normal.

How will I know if I have kidney damage?

Most patients will have no symptoms, even when their kidneys have been affected by their cancer or its treatment. That is why it is so important to attend your regular check-ups at your follow-up clinic.

Continued →

Living with a single kidney

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. 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 be aware of this during some forms of exercise.

What can I do to help keep my kidneys healthy?

Looking after your general health will help to keep your kidneys functioning as well as possible. This includes:

- **drink plenty of water** especially in hot weather
- make sure that any **urine infections** are treated quickly
- **tell any doctors** caring for you about your kidneys, to help inform their choice of treatment
- keep a **healthy weight** by eating a good diet and exercising regularly
- **don't smoke**, as cigarette smoking can make existing kidney damage worse
- follow instructions on **over-the-counter medications** and never exceed the recommended dose
- consider wearing **medical alert identification** if you have a single kidney

Where can I find more information?

Kidney Care UK:
www.kidneycareuk.org

NHS:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/kidney-disease

National Kidney Foundation:
www.kidney.org.uk

Kidney Research UK
www.kidneyresearchuk.org/kidney-health-information/about-kidney-disease/living-with-one-kidney

National Kidney Foundation
www.kidney.org/atoz/content/onekidney

Cure search
curesearch.org/Kidney-Health



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Written by CCLG Late Effects Group, a national network of experts who specialise in looking after young cancer survivors, in conjunction with the CCLG Information Advisory Group, comprising multiprofessional experts in the field of children's cancer. 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.

Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group (CCLG) is a leading national charity and expert voice for all childhood cancers.

Each week in the UK and Ireland, more than 30 children are diagnosed with cancer. Our network of dedicated professional members work together in treatment, care and research to help shape a future where all children with cancer survive and live happy, healthy and independent lives.

We fund and support innovative world-class research and collaborate, both nationally and internationally, to drive forward improvements in childhood cancer. Our award-winning information resources help lessen the anxiety, stress and loneliness commonly felt by families, giving support throughout the cancer journey.

Our work is funded by donations. If you would like to help, text 'CCLG' to 70300 to donate £3. You may be charged for one text message at your network's standard or charity rate. CCLG (registered charity numbers 1182637 and SC049948) will receive 100% of your donation.