

## **Patient Information Sheet: Kidney Stones**

### **What Are Kidney Stones?**

Kidney stones are hard, mineral-based deposits that form in your kidneys. They can vary in size and may cause pain when passing through the urinary tract.

### **Symptoms of Kidney Stones**

- Sudden, severe pain in the back, side, or lower abdomen
- Blood in the urine (pink, red, or brown discoloration)
- Nausea or vomiting
- Frequent or painful urination
- Cloudy or foul-smelling urine
- Fever and chills (if an infection is present)

### **Causes of Kidney Stones**

Kidney stones form when certain substances in the urine, such as calcium, oxalate, or uric acid, become highly concentrated. Risk factors include:

- Dehydration
- Diet high in salt, sugar, or animal protein
- Family history of kidney stones
- Certain medical conditions (e.g., gout, diabetes, urinary tract infections)

### **Treatment Options**

1. **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water to help small stones pass naturally.
2. **Pain Management:** Over-the-counter or prescribed medications can ease discomfort.
3. **Medications:** Some medications can relax the urinary tract muscles or dissolve specific types of stones.
4. **Shock Wave Lithotripsy (SWL):** Non-invasive procedure using sound waves to break stones into smaller pieces.
5. **Ureteroscopy:** A small scope is passed into the urinary tract to remove or break up stones.
6. **Percutaneous Nephrolithotomy (PCNL):** A surgical procedure to remove large or complex stones directly from the kidney.

### **After Treatment: Recovery Tips**

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- **Stay Hydrated:** Aim to drink 2–3 liters of water daily unless otherwise directed.
- **Dietary Changes:**
  - Reduce salt, sugar, and animal protein intake.
  - Limit foods high in oxalates (e.g., spinach, beets, and chocolate) if advised.
- **Medications:** Take prescribed medications to prevent stone recurrence.
- **Activity:** Gradually resume normal activities but avoid heavy lifting or straining for several weeks after surgery.

## Preventing Kidney Stones

- **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- **Dietary Modifications:**
  - Follow a diet tailored to the type of stone (calcium, uric acid, cystine, etc.).
  - Consume adequate calcium through food sources, not supplements.
- **Monitor Health:** Treat underlying conditions such as gout or urinary infections promptly.

## When to Contact Your Doctor

Seek medical attention if you experience:

- Persistent pain or worsening symptoms
- Fever, chills, or signs of infection
- Difficulty urinating or blood in the urine
- Nausea or vomiting that prevents hydration

## Follow-Up Care

- **Regular Check-Ups:** Discuss tests (e.g., urine analysis or imaging) to monitor your kidney health.
- **Stone Analysis:** If a stone is passed, your doctor may analyze its composition to guide prevention strategies.

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