**Diabetes: Kidney Care**

## What do kidneys do?

## Kidneys filter and eliminate waste from the blood.

## They maintain a balance of salt and liquids in the body

## What effect does diabetes have on the kidneys?

* Diabetes causes and excess of glucose (sugar) in the blood, this causes the damage to the kidneys which makes the kidneys stop working adequately.
* Damage to the kidneys (also called renal insufficiency) leads to leakage of proteins necessary for good health from the kidneys into the urine.

**How do I know if my kidneys have been damaged by diabetes?**

## Damage to the kidneys is a slow process, so you won’t immediately notice a change.

## Yearly blood and urine tests by your healthcare provider are key to catch these changes early.

## Other signs that may indicate damage to your kidneys include:

## Overall ill feeling

## Itchy and dry skin

## Fatigue

## Swelling of the hands and feet (edema)

## What happens if my kidneys stop working?

* If kidney damage becomes too severe, the kidneys stop working.
* When the kidneys stop working, a process called dialysis is necessary.
  + A process which uses a machine or special fluids to filter waste from the blood
* If the damage is severe enough, a kidney transplant will be necessary.

**What can I do to protect my kidneys if I am diabetic?**

* Have regular appointments with your healthcare provider, and follow their directions.
* If you have high blood pressure (hypertension), take the necessary medications.
  + Maintaining a normal blood pressure will keep your kidneys healthier for a longer time.
* Follow the diet suggested by your healthcare provider
* Keep your blood sugars in control to avoid unnecessary damage to the kidneys.