



# VA/DoD CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE IN PRIMARY CARE

**Department of Veterans Affairs  
Department of Defense**

## **Patient Guide**

### **QUALIFYING STATEMENTS**

The Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense guidelines are based upon the best information available at the time of publication. They are designed to provide information and assist decision making. They are not intended to define a standard of care and should not be construed as one. Neither should they be interpreted as prescribing an exclusive course of management.

The Clinical Practice Guideline is based on a systematic review of both clinical and epidemiological evidence. Developed by a panel of multidisciplinary experts, it provides a clear explanation of the logical relationships between various care options and health outcomes while rating both the quality of the evidence and the strength of the recommendations.

Variations in practice will inevitably and appropriately occur when clinicians take into account the needs of individual patients, available resources, and limitations unique to an institution or type of practice. Every healthcare professional making use of these guidelines is responsible for evaluating the appropriateness of applying them in the setting of any particular clinical situation.

The guidelines are not intended to represent TRICARE policy. Further, inclusion of recommendations for specific testing and/or therapeutic interventions within these guidelines does not guarantee coverage of civilian sector care. Additional information on current TRICARE benefits may be found at [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil) or by contacting your regional TRICARE Managed Care Support Contractor.

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## Chronic Kidney Disease

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a condition in which your kidneys are damaged and cannot filter blood as well as healthy kidneys. Because of this, wastes from the blood remain in the body and may cause other health problems. [1] CKD is one of the most common serious medical conditions affecting adults in the United States. Your illness may be mild without symptoms or can range to a severe illness associated with progression to end-stage renal disease (ESRD) which may require dialysis or kidney transplantation.

### Did You Know?

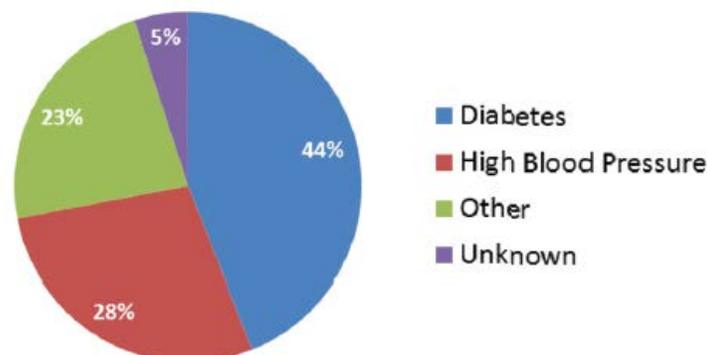
- The CDC estimates that more than 10% of adults in the United States—more than 20 million people—may have CKD. [1]
- The prevalence of CKD in the Veteran population is estimated to be a third higher than in the general population.
- The Veteran's Health Administration (VHA) currently cares for over 200,000 Veterans with moderate to severe kidney disease.

### What Causes Chronic Kidney Disease?

In many patients, CKD is caused by (or linked with) other conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, poor nutrition, and anemia. Figure 1 below shows the percentage of new cases of CKD due to some of these conditions. Early treatment is important to stop, or at least slow down, kidney damage. The risk of developing CKD increases among people over 50 years of age and peaks after 70 years of age. [1] Some other risk factors for CKD include:

- A personal or family history of kidney disease
- Diabetes, high blood pressure, or other disease (e.g., chronic heart failure [CHF])
- Systemic illness (e.g., infection with human immunodeficiency virus [HIV])
- Race and ethnicity (e.g., African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans)

**Figure 1. New Cases of Kidney Failure by Primary Diagnosis (2011)**



Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/factsheets/kidney.htm>



### How is Chronic Kidney Disease Diagnosed?

CKD is diagnosed based on your **estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR)**, or the presence of another abnormal kidney condition.

Although ultrasound and other technologies are not required, your health care provider may use them to confirm the diagnosis, rule out other conditions, or guide your overall treatment plan.

### How is Chronic Kidney Disease Treated?

While there is no cure, CKD can be managed through a combination of provider-recommended treatments and self-management strategies.

Talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, pharmacist or other health care provider about appropriate medications and other approaches to preventing progression of CKD. Also, self-management strategies such as diet modifications and other lifestyle changes such as weight loss, exercise, health education and smoking cessation should be discussed with your health care provider.

CKD is a chronic condition, but effective treatments and support are available from the Veterans Health Administration and Department of Defense. A comprehensive care and management plan can help you improve your quality of life.

### What is an estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR)?

This value estimates your level of kidney function and determines your stage of kidney disease. Your health care provider can calculate it from the results of your blood creatinine test, your age, body size and gender. [2]

### Where can I find more information?

The National Kidney Program: <http://www.va.gov/health/services/renal>

VA e-Kidney Clinic: <http://ckd.vacloud.us>

The National Kidney Foundation (NKF): <http://www.kidney.org/patients>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://nccd.cdc.gov/ckd>

The National Kidney Disease Education Program (NKDEP): <http://nkdep.nih.gov/>

### References:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *National chronic kidney disease fact sheet*. Atlanta,GA: 2014. [http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/kidney\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/kidney_factsheet.pdf). Accessed February 24, 2014.
2. *Glomerular filtration rate*. New York, NY: National Kidney Foundation, Inc.; 2013. <http://www.kidney.org/atoz/content/gfr>.