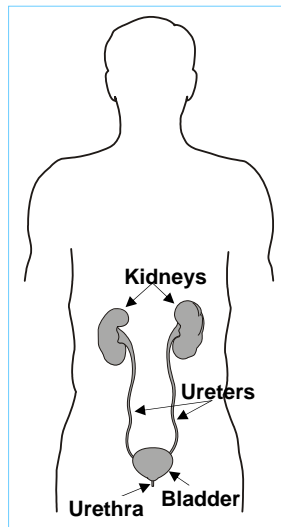


Emergency Services

Kidney Stones (Renal Colic)

What are kidney stones?

Kidney stones are made of minerals and salts that stick together and form crystals in your urine. The stones can be as small as a grain of sand or as large as a marble. Some are smooth, but most are jagged. The stones can stay in your kidney or move out of your body when you urinate. Most stones pass out of the body without any need to see a doctor.



The most common cause of kidney stones is not drinking enough water. This makes your urine more concentrated. Minerals and salts can then stick together forming stones.

Some people do not have any pain while other people have a lot of pain. The pain is caused by the size of the stone, the stone moving between the kidney and the bladder, or the stone getting stuck somewhere between the kidney and the bladder.

Go to the nearest Emergency Department if:

- You have severe pain in your back or side that will not go away, even with pain medication.
- You can not drink water or swallow your medications because you feel so sick.
- You have chills and a fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F).
- Your urine smells bad, or looks cloudy.
- You feel stinging, burning, or pain when you go to the toilet (urinate).
- You can not empty your bladder.

Remember

If we gave you narcotic pain medicine (such as morphine) in the hospital and/or we gave you a prescription for a narcotic pain reliever (such as Tylenol with codeine), you **must not** drive or operate machinery for 12 hours after taking the medicine.

Kidney Stones (Renal Colic) - *continued*

How to take care of yourself at home

Take regular pain medications as directed by the doctor.

Make an appointment to see your family doctor in two (2) days. We may ask that you go see a kidney specialist as well.

If the stone is too big to move out on its own, or if it gets stuck on the way out, you may need more treatment.

Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water each day. A good way to do this is to drink one glass of water every hour while you are awake.

Ways to prevent kidney stones

Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water each day.

Keep active. Kidney stones are more common if you are not active or sit much of the day.

With some types of stones:

- You might be asked to not eat certain foods.
- You might need to take certain medications to help prevent stones from forming.

What the words mean

Kidneys (sounds like kid-nee) – These bean-shaped organs take waste out of the blood and make urine.

Ureters (sounds like yer-et-ters) - These two small tubes carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder.

Bladder (sounds like blah-der) – A hollow organ that collects and holds urine until it can move out of the body.

Urethra (sounds like yer-ee-thra) - A small short tube that carries the urine from the bladder out of the body.

Urine (sounds like yer-in) - The waste fluid made by the kidneys, commonly called 'pee'.

Urinate (sounds like yer-in-ate) – The action of moving urine out of the body, commonly called 'going to the toilet' or 'going pee'.

To learn more, it's good to ask:

- Your family doctor
- Your pharmacist
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca

Adapted with permission from 'Kidney Stones – Going Home' (July 2010) by Providence Health Care.