

# Do you want to know?

## Chronic Renal Failure

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### What is it?

Chronic renal failure occurs when the kidneys slowly stop working or when the ureters or bladder are blocked. As waste products accumulate in the blood, fluid overload will occur and the kidneys can no longer get rid of excess water. The most common signs and symptoms are: increase in blood pressure, swelling in extremities, engorged neck veins, severe itching, gray bronze skin color, dry skin, abnormal breath sounds, shortness of breath, mouth ulceration and bleeding, lack of appetite, nausea and vomiting, weakness and fatigue, confusion, disorientation, and muscle cramps.

### What do you need to know?

#### Drugs



Take medications as prescribed by your physician.

#### Diet



- Follow a high calorie, low protein, low sodium and low potassium diet.
- Take fluids as allowed by your physician.

#### Activity



Remain at bed rest with alternating activity in between.

#### Therapeutic Measures



- Weigh yourself daily.
- Monitor urine output.
- Maintain oral hygiene to minimize dryness of oral cavity.
- Monitor and record blood pressure as indicated.
- Prevent bleeding by avoiding vigorous nose blowing and contact sports. Use a soft toothbrush.

- Prevent skin breakdown by massaging bony areas.
- Monitor blood tests as indicated to assess the degree of anemia
- Avoid carrying heavy weights.

#### Considerations



- Provide a safe environment at home since renal patients have the tendency to bleed, get bone fractures with weakness, and confusion might be present at times.
- Report to your physician any change caused by the disease and/or treatment.
- Report evidence of inadequate protein intake such as swelling of extremities or delayed healing.
- Report signs of fluid overload such as vision changes, headache, swelling of extremities or seizures (jerky movements).
- Report worsening signs of renal failure such as nausea, vomiting, decreased urine output and ammonia odor breath.
- Report signs of pericarditis (inflammation of the membrane that surrounds the heart) such as high temperature, chest pain, extreme low blood pressure, bulging neck veins and/or weak peripheral pulses.

### INSTRUCTIONS

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The content of this educational leaflet is of general information. Ask your physician or health care provider if this content applies to you.

Prepared by the Nursing Services in coordination with other health care disciplines.