

Simple Lifestyle Changes to Manage Kidney Stones

Kidney stones are deceiving as they may be small in size but oftentimes cause excruciating pain when passed through the body. Ask anyone who has experienced an episode of passing one. Out of all the kidney disorders, kidney stones are one of the most common and painful. About 10 percent of people will develop a kidney stone at some point in their lives. For many, stones become a chronic problem and people who get one stone are more likely to develop others.

But, did you know your lifestyle plays an active role in the treatment of kidney stones? By making some simple lifestyle changes you may be able to reduce your risk of developing another kidney stone. Drinking plenty of fluids and watching your diet are key components to managing kidney stones.

Fluid Intake



One of the goals of kidney stone treatment is to keep your urine as dilute as possible. This helps to keep the substances that could potentially form a kidney stone, such as calcium and oxalate, move quickly through the urinary tract. Try to drink at least two liters of fluid a day. A good gauge of whether or not you are drinking enough fluids is urine color. Except for the first thing in the morning, it should be pale in color. If your urine is dark yellow, that's an indication that you should drink more fluids.

Changing your diet

Whether or not diet can help you avoid another kidney stone depends on what kind of stone you had and what caused it to form in the first place. If your stone was made up of calcium oxalate, calcium phosphate, or uric acid, what you eat or don't eat can help prevent a recurrence.

Nutrients to consider include:

- Reduce your intake of dietary sodium. Some of these include:
 - ◆ Lunch meats and cured meats like ham, sausage, and bacon
 - ◆ Salted snacks
 - ◆ Prepared salad dressings, mustard, ketchup, soy sauce and barbecue sauce
 - ◆ Pickled foods and olives
 - ◆ Canned soup and bouillon
- Reduce your intake of animal protein, which includes meat, poultry, fish and eggs
- Maintain proper calcium intake from food or calcium supplements

If your kidney stones contained calcium oxalate, you may also need to avoid certain plant foods that bind with calcium and other minerals. If your body is not absorbing and using calcium correctly, you could end up with too much oxalate in your urine. You can reduce the level of oxalate in your system by avoiding these foods:

- Spinach
- Rhubarb
- Strawberries
- Chocolate
- Wheat bran
- Nuts
- Beets
- Brewed tea

Before making any of these changes with your fluid intake or changing your diet, talk with your doctor or a registered dietitian.

*Source: National Kidney Foundation, www.kidney.org

*Source: ESBCO Publishing

A Noninvasive Treatment for Kidney Stones Now Offered at Nashoba



For patients suffering from kidney stones, Nashoba Valley Medical Center now offers lithotripsy, a nonsurgical treatment that uses high-energy shock waves to break kidney stones into tiny pieces. These pieces are then easily passed with urine.

Nashoba's Urologists, Stefan Karos, MD, and Kevin Tomera, MD, work alongside highly skilled technologists to perform this procedure, which uses the latest technology available.

The benefits to patients who have lithotripsy include:

- Lower complication rates
- Greater success rates in breaking up the kidney stone
- Reduced procedure time
- Shorter recovery period

Depending on the size and location of the kidney stone will determine what type of treatment option is best for a patient.

To learn more about Nashoba's urology services or to schedule an appointment with Drs. Karos or Tomera, call 978-784-9972.