Kidney Disease: Medicines You Should Avoid

Your kidneys remove, or filter, waste from your blood. They also help keep your body's fluids and chemicals in balance. If you have kidney disease, your kidneys cannot filter your blood the way they should. Waste can build up in your blood and make you sick.

One way to help avoid more harm to your kidneys is to be careful about the medicines you take.

Your doctor can help you avoid medicines that may harm your kidneys.

Being careful with certain medicines

Common medicines that your doctor may change or adjust include:

- Pain medicines.
  - Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can reduce the flow of blood to your kidneys. Examples are ibuprofen and naproxen. NSAIDs are also found in medicines for fever, colds and coughs, and sleep problems.

- Acetaminophen and aspirin may be harmful if overused. They are usually safe in small amounts.

- Statins, used for high cholesterol.

- Diabetes medicines.

- Heartburn and upset-stomach medicines. These medicines can affect your electrolytes.

- Antimicrobial medicines. These include some antibiotics, anti-fungal, and antiviral medicines.

- Herbal products. Many herbs can interact with other medicines. And some contain minerals like potassium that are harmful for people who have kidney disease. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before you take herbal products.

Your doctor may suggest a different medicine for you. Or your doctor may say it's okay for you to continue to take a medicine but may change how much you take. Don't stop taking any prescription medicines without talking to your doctor first.

How to work with your doctor

Keeping track of your medicines can be a challenge sometimes, especially if you are taking many different kinds. By working closely with your doctor, you can stay safe and avoid medicines that may harm you. Here are some important tips:

- Make sure your doctor knows all the medicines you take. This includes over-the-counter (OTC), prescription, and herbal medicines, and any vitamins or supplements.

- Keep a current list of all your medicines. Take the list with you each time you see your doctor or see a new doctor.

- Talk with your doctor first before you take any new medicines or herbal products.
• Take your medicines exactly as your doctor says. And always follow the directions on the label.
• Ask your doctor about using medicines other than NSAIDs for pain relief.
• Tell all of your doctors and other health professionals that you have kidney problems. This will help you avoid getting medicines that may harm your kidneys.

• If you have kidney disease, wear medical alert jewelry that lets others know. You can buy this jewelry at most drugstores.

Do you have any questions or concerns after reading this information? It's a good idea to write them down and take them to your next doctor visit.