

Renal and ureteric stones: assessment and management

Information for the public

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Kidney stones: the care you should expect

Kidney stones affect about 3 in 20 men and 2 in 20 women at some stage in their lives. They can be extremely painful and if left untreated can lead to kidney infections or the kidney not working properly. Small stones can pass out naturally in urine, but larger ones may need to be broken down or removed by surgery. Up to half of people with kidney stones get them again within 5 years.

We want this guideline to make a difference to people with kidney stones by making sure that:

- if you have severe pain that could be kidney stones, you have a scan – this should be a CT scan, or an ultrasound scan if you're under 16 or pregnant
- doctors know the best ways to manage different types and sizes of kidney stone and which medicines to give for the pain
- you get advice on diet and lifestyle, and other ways you can reduce your chance of getting kidney stones again.

Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your healthcare professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

They should discuss with you:

- the pros and cons of leaving your kidney stones if they are not causing problems rather than treating them straightaway
- changes you can make, such as drinking more water, managing your weight and making sure your diet is not high in salt.

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your healthcare professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about kidney stones.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Kidney Care UK](#), 01420 541424
- [Polycystic Kidney Disease Charity](#), 0300 111 1234

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by kidney stones and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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