

Proteinuria

The presence of protein in the urine is called proteinuria. The kidney's glomerules filter the body's blood and retain most of the proteins and essential nutrients, but allow wastes to go into the urine. The blood enters the kidneys through arteries that branch out inside the kidney and form minute clusters of meandering blood vessels. Each cluster is given the name of glomerule. There are approximately one million glomerules in each kidney. The presence of protein in the urine is an indication that the glomerules are allowing protein to pass into the urine and that kidney function may be damaged. Kidney problems, such as glomerulonephritis (inflammation affecting the glomerule), can cause proteinuria. Proteinuria may also be related to high blood pressure or to diabetes. These diseases, especially if untreated, can cause renal failure. Some medications can also affect kidney function. Early diagnosis and treatment of proteinuria and of the underlying cause are crucial to avoid greater kidney damage. In diabetic patients, the presence of protein in the urine can be an early sign that kidney function is deteriorating. High levels of proteinuria can cause edema.

Symptoms of proteinuria

Patients who have proteinuria may notice that there is foam in the toilet when they urinate. The doctor may diagnose the presence of proteinuria performing a blood test as part of a physical examination. If you have diabetes, you must have regular check-ups to detect the presence of protein in the urine. If you have high blood pressure, you must work with your doctor to keep it controlled.