

## **Renal Insufficiency**

Renal failure occurs when the kidneys lose the ability to filter waste products from the blood and cannot regulate the body's balance of electrolytes (salt) and water. The production of urine decreases, and waste products and water accumulate in the body. Over time, renal failure can affect the functioning of other body organs. There are three types of renal failure: acute, chronic and terminal.

### Acute renal failure

Acute renal failure occurs when a disease, an infection or a trauma injures the kidneys. It may be due to septic shock (a serious infection that affects all body organs), major surgery, serious burns, massive hemorrhages, heart attack or other serious diseases.

Patients with acute renal failure are generally critically ill. The symptoms of acute renal failure include loss of skin color, decreased urine production, high or low blood pressure, nausea and vomiting, confusion and swelling.

These symptoms occur in addition to the symptoms of the underlying disease or health problem.

Your doctor will evaluate the symptoms and will ask you for your medical history. The tests will include a general urine test and possibly other additional urine tests. A blood test may also be done to measure kidney function. In addition, your doctor may order X-rays or echograms of the kidneys.

### Treatment

The treatment of acute renal failure is geared toward treating the underlying cause of the acute renal failure. It is also geared to treating the liquid and electrolyte imbalances associated with renal failure. The treatments may include:

- intravenous liquids
- limiting the amount of protein in the diet
- it may be necessary to undergo dialysis to eliminate the waste products from the blood if the symptoms are severe
- restricting sodium and phosphorus in the diet
- medication

In adults with acute renal failure, the prognosis tends to be good. If the cause of acute renal failure is treated in time, kidney function may return to normal or almost normal. In some cases, however, the damage to the kidneys may be permanent.