

# Lifestyle choices can reduce the risk of kidney disease

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Active lifestyle choices such as eating vegetables, exercising and quitting smoking can reduce the risk of chronic kidney disease, a new study from Australian and Swedish researchers has found.

Published in *The Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*, researchers from Griffith University and Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, undertook a [systematic review](#) of more than 100 published research papers to determine which [lifestyle](#)

[changes](#) can lower the risk of [kidney disease](#).

About 10 percent of the world population suffers from some kind of chronic [kidney](#) disease. In 2017, more than 1.2 million people were estimated to have died as a direct result of their kidney disease and another 1.4 million of the cardiovascular complications caused by reduced kidney function.

The study included more than 2.5 million healthy people from 16 countries. Of particular interest to the researchers were the effects of diet, exercise, tobacco smoking and alcohol on the risk of developing kidney problems.

"More and more people get diagnosed with kidney disease each year, which eventually can progress to dialysis or [early death](#) without intensive medical treatment, necessitating the need to prevent this condition all together," said Dr. Jaimon Kelly from Griffith's Menzies Health Institute Queensland.

"However, there is currently no clear information available to doctors and the general population for how to do this. We collected all the available evidence for food, nutrients, beverages, physical activity, alcohol consumption and tobacco smoking and whether these were linked to the risk of developing kidney problems. We discovered that lifestyle choices may a big role in the risk of getting kidney disease and we think these can help clinical decision-making by doctors and healthy patients on lifestyle choices and preventing kidney damage."

The advice includes a more vegetable-rich diet, a higher potassium intake, more exercise, moderate alcohol consumption, less salt consumption and quitting smoking. Adherence to these recommendations may reduce the risk of chronic kidney disease by between 14 and 22 percent.

"In the absence of randomized intervention studies in the field, this study is the best evidence we have to date on what lifestyle choices can help for

primary prevention of kidney disease," says Juan Jesus Carrero, professor of epidemiology at the Department of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Karolinska Institutet.

The researchers stress that the advice applies to healthy people at risk of developing kidney problems, and that people who are already suffering from kidney [disease](#) are to follow other [lifestyle](#) recommendations to avoid unnecessary strain on their kidneys.

**More information:** Jaimon T. Kelly et al. Modifiable Lifestyle Factors for Primary Prevention of CKD: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1681/ASN.2020030384](https://doi.org/10.1681/ASN.2020030384)

Provided by Griffith University

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