

RePROM Patient Advice Wording

Main symptoms

1. Fatigue

Fatigue or extreme tiredness can be experienced by patients with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) and can be caused by several things including:

- Anaemia (a low red blood count) – find out more at [NHS Choices](#) and [Kidney Care UK](#)
- Uraemia (a build-up of certain toxins in the blood)
- Depression – find out more at [NHS Choices](#)

Blood tests will identify the first two, but discussion with your healthcare professional may identify the third.

Anaemia can be treated with iron tablets or EPO injections (to help your body turn the iron into red blood cells). Increasing the amount of iron in your diet may also be recommended. Find out more about treatments for anaemia from the [US National Institutes for Health](#).

Uraemia is monitored by your CKD healthcare team and once it reaches a certain level it may be a sign that the time has come to discuss [dialysis](#) options.

*Find out more about CKD treatment options at [NHS Choices](#)
Also see the US National Institutes for Health – [Managing CKD](#)*

2. Shortness of breath

Feeling breathless either during activity or at rest is common in Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). This may be caused by:

- Anaemia (a low red blood count) – find out more at [NHS Choices](#) and [Kidney Care UK](#)
- Excess fluid in or around the lungs (pulmonary oedema)

Anaemia can be treated with iron tablets or EPO injections (to help your body turn the iron into red blood cells). Increasing the amount of iron in your diet may also be recommended. Find out more about treatments for anaemia from the [US National Institutes for Health](#).

If you have excess fluid this can be managed in two ways:

- With medications - water tablets such as Furosemide or Bumetanide, which are known as diuretics.
- Your doctor, nurse or dietitian may also advise you to reduce the amount of fluid you drink each day. This may include all drinks, soups, sauces and foods such as ice cream.

Find out more about CKD treatment options at [NHS Choices](#)
Also see the US National Institutes for Health – [Managing CKD](#)

3. Reduced appetite

Feeling that you don't want to eat as much as usual can happen when the kidney function drops. It can be a sign that the time has come to discuss [dialysis](#) options. Depression can also cause a reduction in appetite so it is important that you mention this symptom to your healthcare professional. See below for more information about diet:

- [Diet in CKD](#)
- [Eating right for CKD](#)

Find out more about CKD treatment options at [NHS Choices](#)
Also see the US National Institutes for Health – [Managing CKD](#)

4. Nausea

While there can be many causes of feeling sick or vomiting after eating, this can occur when the kidney function drops. Other causes of nausea and vomiting can include gastroenteritis (tummy upset) and some medications.

It is very important that you tell your healthcare professional if you are experiencing Nausea (feeling like you are going to be sick) or vomiting (being sick), as it may be a sign that the time has come to consider [dialysis](#) options.

Find out more about CKD treatment options at [NHS Choices](#)
Also see the US National Institutes for Health – [Managing CKD](#)

5. Itchy/dry skin

The causes of a persistent itch can include high levels of certain minerals in your blood. Your doctor, nurse or dietitian may advise you to modify your diet to address this.

See below for more information about diet:

- [Diet in CKD](#)
- [Eating right for CKD](#)

Find out more about CKD treatment options at [NHS Choices](#)
Also see the US National Institutes for Health – [Managing CKD](#)

6. Problems with Fistula

If you have a fistula and your arm becomes swollen or painful, or your fingers/hand becomes cold or numb you should get in touch with your

healthcare professional immediately as there may be a problem with fistula which might need treatment.

For information on how to take care of your fistula – please see [here](#)

7. Pain

Pain is a problem for many patients with CKD and there are a number possible causes, for example:

- Bone and joint pain which can be due to wear and tear damage to the joints.
- Bone pains due to abnormal levels of certain minerals or hormones in your system.

If pain is a problem for you, please tell your doctor about it as they may be able to advise on ways to manage it better.

Please note: some pain tablets or creams can make the kidney function worse (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs, e.g. ibuprofen or diclofenac). Other pain drugs can build up and cause symptoms such as confusion and drowsiness (e.g. tramadol or morphine sulphate/oramorph). When taking such medication, always discuss with your doctor or healthcare professional to make sure you get the best advice.

Find out more about CKD treatment options at [NHS Choices](#)

Also see the US National Institutes for Health – [Managing CKD](#)

Other symptoms

1. Faintness/dizziness

Feeling dizzy or lightheaded could be a symptom of low blood pressure, especially if it occurs when you stand from a sitting or lying position. Please tell your doctor about this symptom. They may check your blood pressure while sitting then standing, or they may organise a more test. Based on the results they might make changes to your medications.

Find out more about CKD treatment options at [NHS Choices](#)

Also see the US National Institutes for Health – [Managing CKD](#)

2. Difficulty sleeping

As kidney function drops, your sleep pattern can be disturbed. There can be a number of different problems that need to be addressed:

- Obstructive sleep apnoea (a problem caused by stopping breathing multiple times during the night).
- Insomnia related to anxiety or depression.
- Restless legs at night.
- Daytime sleeping which has led to a broken sleep pattern

Find out more about strategies for getting enough sleep from the US National Institutes for Health – [here](#)

*Find out more about CKD treatment options at [NHS Choices](#)
Also see the US National Institutes for Health – [Managing CKD](#)*

3. Restless legs

The feeling of restless legs can disrupt sleep and can also make sitting in one position for dialysis sessions difficult, restless legs can be caused by a number of different things including nerve damage related to diabetes, a lack of iron or high levels of certain hormones.

Please discuss these symptoms with your healthcare professional, who may be able to offer treatment to help relieve the symptoms.

*Find out more about CKD treatment options at [NHS Choices](#)
Also see the US National Institutes for Health – [Managing CKD](#)*

4. Diarrhoea

This is an uncommon complication of CKD but if you experience diarrhoea it could lead to you becoming dehydrated which could in turn cause your kidney function to get worse.

If you have diarrhoea that goes on for more than 48-hours, then it is important that you seek advice from your healthcare professional.

If you take a type of medication called an ACEi or ARB (the drugs are used to treat high blood pressure and have names that end in -pril or -tan, for example Ramipril or losartan) you should stop taking them during episodes of diarrhoea and vomiting. The same applies to diuretic medications ('water tablets' such as furosemide, bumetanide, amiloride or spironolactone).

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Also see the US National Institutes for Health – [Managing CKD](#)*

5. Ankle swelling

Ankle or leg swelling can occur in CKD and is usually due to fluid collection. For people who are not mobile the fluid can collect around their tummy or lower back causing swelling there. Patients often report that their legs get more swollen as the day goes on.

If you have excess fluid this can be managed in two ways:

- With medications - water tablets such as Furosemide or Bumetanide, which are known as diuretics.
- Your doctor, nurse or dietitian may also advise you to reduce the amount of fluid you drink each day. This may include all drinks, soups, sauces and foods such as ice cream.



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