



What You Need to Know About Kidney Cancer

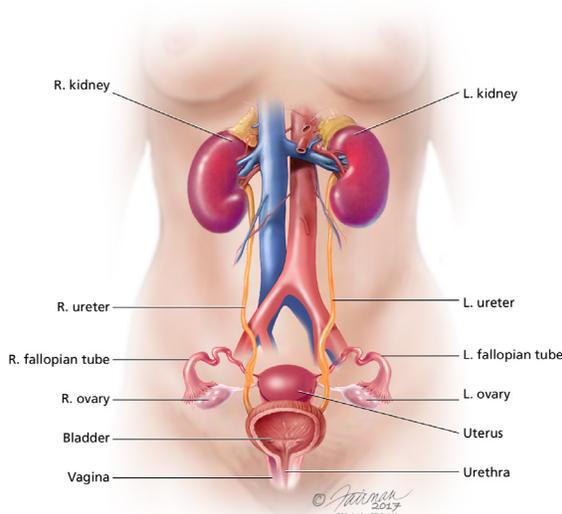
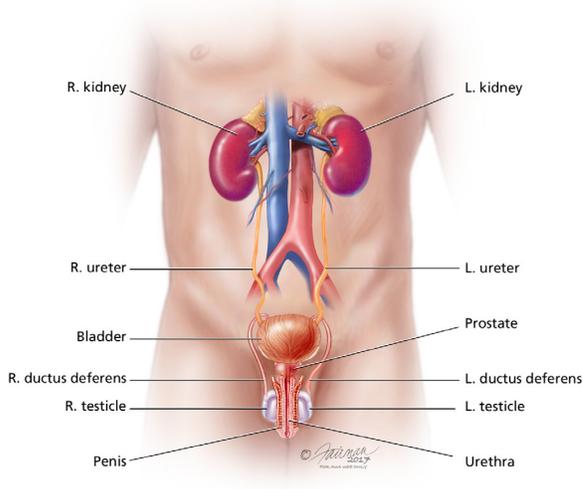
Urology Care
FOUNDATION™
 The Official Foundation of the
 American Urological Association

WHAT ARE THE KIDNEYS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

Healthy kidneys work around the clock to clean our blood. Our kidneys are needed for life. The kidneys are two bean-shaped organs that sit near the middle of the back below the rib cage. They do many things but mainly work to:

- Clean our blood
- Balance fluids
- Remove waste as urine
- Keep the body's essential chemicals in balance
- Make hormones to keep our blood pressure normal

Male and Female Urinary System



WHAT IS KIDNEY CANCER?

Cancer is when body cells grow abnormally and out of control. These abnormal cells may show up as lumps in the kidney. Some kidney lumps are benign (not cancerous). Some are malignant (cancerous). Kidney cancer is one of the more common cancers in the United States. There are many different kinds of kidney cancer. The most common ones are:

- **Renal cell carcinoma:** the most common kidney cancer in adults.
- **Transitional cell carcinoma:** the second most common kidney cancer in adults.
- **Wilms Tumor:** a kidney cancer usually found in children.

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What You Need to Know About Kidney Cancer

WHAT CAUSES KIDNEY CANCER?

No one thing causes kidney cancer. But there are some things that raise your risk of getting the disease:

- Smoking
- Obesity
- Family history of high blood pressure
- Being on kidney dialysis
- Workplace exposure to chlorinated chemicals

More men than women get kidney cancer. Kidney cancer is more common in African American, American Indian and Alaskan Native people.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF KIDNEY CANCER?

You may not have symptoms of kidney cancer. But if you do, the most likely ones are:

- Hematuria (blood in urine)
- Flank pain — your flank is the fleshy part of your body between the ribs and hips
- Low back pain on one side (not caused by injury) and that does not go away
- A lump in the belly
- Loss of hunger and weight loss for no known reason
- Anemia
- Feeling tired

HOW IS KIDNEY CANCER TREATED?

The goal of kidney cancer treatment is to protect the working of the kidney as much as possible. Your doctor may suggest one of these ways to treat the tumor:

- Active surveillance— watch and wait
- Ablation— kill the cells with extreme cold or heat
- Partial nephrectomy— remove part of the kidney
- Radical nephrectomy—remove the whole kidney

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

To get the most from the visit with your doctor, you might want to write down a few questions and take them with you. Here are some ideas:

- What kind of kidney cancer do I have?
- Can my cancer be cured?
- Has the cancer spread? If so, how far?
- What tests will I have to do before treatment?
- What treatment do you suggest? Why this treatment?
- How do I get ready for my treatment?
- What side effects will I have from this treatment?
- Will I need to see other doctors and specialists?
- Will my cancer return after this treatment?
- Are there support groups that can help me through this?

ABOUT UROLOGY CARE FOUNDATION

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic Foundation—and the official Foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make healthy changes in their lives. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts.

To learn more about different urologic issues visit **UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions**. Go to **UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist** to find a doctor near you.

DISCLAIMER

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please talk to your urologist or health care provider about your health concerns. Always consult a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications.

For copies of printed materials about Kidney Cancer and other urologic conditions, visit **UrologyHealth.org/Order** or call 800-828-7866.