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QUESTION

Discuss the diseases of the renal system

ANSWER

Humans have two kidneys, each about the size of your fist. They are near the middle of your back, just below the rib cage. Inside each kidney there are about a million tiny structures called nephrons. They filter your blood. They remove wastes and extra water, which become urine. The urine flows through tubes called ureters. It goes to your bladder, which stores the urine until you go to the bathroom.

Most kidney diseases attack the nephrons. This damage may leave kidneys unable to remove wastes. Causes can include genetic problems, injuries, or medicines. You have a higher risk of kidney disease if you have diabetes, high blood pressure, or a close family member with kidney disease. Chronic kidney disease damages the nephrons slowly over several years.

COMMON DISEASES AND DISORDERS

1. Kidney Stones Form from Substances in Urine

The kidneys produce urine to eliminate waste. Kidney stones can form when mineral and acid salts in the urine crystallize and stick together. If the stone is small, it can pass easily through the urinary system and out of the body. A larger stone can get stuck in the urinary tract, however. A stuck kidney stone causes pain and can block the flow of urine.

2. Urinary Incontinence Is the Loss of Bladder Control

Most bladder control issues arise when the sphincter muscles of the urethra are too weak or too active. If the sphincter muscles are too weak, a cough or sneeze can cause urination. Sphincter muscles that are too active can trigger a sudden, strong urge to urinate with little urine in the bladder. These issues are diagnosed as urinary incontinence (UI). Women experience UI twice as often as men. It becomes more common with age.

3. Fluid-filled Cysts Can Develop in the Kidneys

A simple kidney cyst is a rounded pouch or a closed pocket that is usually filled with fluid. In polycystic kidney disease (PKD), clusters of cysts form inside the kidneys and take the place of the normal tissue. The affected kidneys become enlarged and work poorly. PKD is an inherited condition that often leads to kidney failure, requiring dialysis or kidney transplantation. Acquired cystic kidney disease (ACKD) typically affects people already on dialysis from chronic kidney disease. In ACKD the kidneys do not enlarge and no other symptoms occur.

4. Chronic Kidney Disease Can Lead to Kidney Failure

In chronic kidney disease (CKD), the kidneys are damaged and unable to filter blood properly. This damage can lead to a build-up of waste substances in the body and to other problems, including kidney failure. The most common causes of CKD include diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. A diseased kidney may look smaller and have a granular surface.