

Avondale Medical Practice

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Dear Patient

You recently had some blood tests done and this has shown that your kidney function is reduced. We measure a blood test called the estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) which is a measure of how well the kidney is working. Over time this level can drop and it's a bit like wear and tear in your kidneys. When people get into their 60s it is very common for this level to start to drop as it's a sign of ageing. When your eGFR drops to 59 or below it is called Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). We appreciate that this sounds worrying, but what it means is that over time your kidney function has slowed down and this can happen for, many reasons, but for most people it is part of the ageing process.

For most people CKD does not cause any obvious symptoms and may not get any worse but once we know that the eGFR has dropped into this level it is important that we monitor this, normally on a yearly basis. We will check your routine bloods, urine and make sure your blood pressure (BP) is well controlled. Sometimes the eGFR will go back to normal if there has been a reversible cause of this drop, often due to medications or illness.

There are a number of things which will keep your kidney healthy and help slow down any deterioration. This includes the usual health advice of stopping smoking, losing weight, regular exercise, good hydration, and eating a healthy diet low in saturated fats and especially salt. Another important thing is being aware of what medications you are on. We will let you know if we prescribe anything which may have an adverse effect on your kidney function, but it's important to know that common anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen, naproxen and meloxicam can affect kidney function. There are times when we will need to continue prescribing these, as they are important for inflammatory conditions, but we will closely monitor this. It's advisable not to use regular "over the counter medications" like ibuprofen for any length of time or without discussing this with us.

CKD can increase the risk of heart disease and strokes, especially if it worsens and if you are diabetic you are at higher risk of CKD. It is important that your BP is well controlled and you have good diabetic control to cut down on any complications. It is also important for you to have your yearly flu vaccine and your pneumococcal vaccine when offered.

For most people with CKD, they will not notice any difference in their lives and most will continue to have good health without it leading to any serious kidney disease. A small proportion of people may develop worsening kidney function which may need referral to hospital services, hence the reason why we will monitor you on a yearly basis to keep this under review.

By sending you this letter we don't want to cause any alarm, but rather engage in health promotion and to keep you as well as possible, however we realise you may wish to discuss this further so feel free to contact any of the doctors or practice nurse to discuss further , also kidneycare.uk.org is a good website for further information.

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