**Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)- information sheet Ladywell East Medical Centre**

**What do the kidneys do?**

Most people have two kidneys, they sit in your lower back under your ribs.

The kidneys make urine, they filter your blood, remove waste products from your blood into your urine. They produce hormones to regulate your blood pressure, they activate Vitamin D to keep bones healthy and create erythropoietin to control the production of red blood cells.

**What is CKD?**

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a long term condition where the kidneys work less well than they should. The kidneys then are unable to remove waste products from your body. Damage to the filter system can also allow blood and protein to leak into the urine. **The majority of patients with CKD have no symptoms and do not need specialist input.** Although it is not possible to repair damage that has happened to your kidneys, CKD will not necessarily get worse. CKD cannot always be prevented, but you can take steps to reduce the chances of getting the condition.

Around 10% of people in UK have CKD, in people over 80yrs, this increases to 20% but this is usually mild and does not require specialist input.

**How is CKD diagnosed?**

Most people are diagnosed by a blood and urine test. You may have had these tests by chance or because you are at risk of developing CKD.

Once you are diagnosed, your doctor will work out what stage of CKD you have. This is done by measuring the amount of creatinine, a waste product which builds up in kidney disease. Using this we can estimate how well the kidneys are working. You may hear this referred to as your estimated glomerular filtration rate (e-GFR).

CKD is divided into stages with 1 being least damaged and 5 most damaged. CKD can gradually get worse over time but for the majority of people it remains stable. Most people with CKD stages 1-3 can manage the condition themselves with their GP and do not need any specialist input from kidney doctors.

**What can increase the risks of CKD?**

There are lots of causes of CKD. The most common causes are:

Diabetes, Heart Disease, High blood pressure (hypertension), inflammation within the kidneys (glomerulonephritis), blockages to the flow of urine such as prostate problems, certain medications such as non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) e.g ibuprofen and family history of kidney disease.

**What are the symptoms of CKD?**

Most people with CKD have no symptoms. Symptoms may only be noticeable with more advanced kidney disease (stages 4 and 5). Even though you may not have symptoms, CKD can increase your chance of having high blood pressure, heart disease or stroke. It is therefore important that you are reviewed regularly at the practice.

**What can I do to help myself?**

If you smoke, stop. Ask for help in stopping, there are lots of treatments to help.

Having controlled blood pressure is the key. Take any blood pressure medications regularly. Reduce the amount of salt in your diet to less than 6g per day. Avoid low salt products (contain salt substitute, potassium).

Take regular exercise and try to maintain a healthy weight.

Eat a healthy and balanced diet. Limit alcohol intake (below 14 units/week).

Avoid drugs that may make things worse such as anti-inflammatory medicines (ibuprofen). Ask your pharmacist each time you are given a new drug to check that it is OK to take with your kidneys.

Attend for regular check-ups when requested.

Ensure annual flu vaccine and one off pneumococcal vaccine.

**Where can I find more information?**

Kidney Care UK: [www.kidneycareuk.org](http://www.kidneycareuk.org)

[NHS Inform - CKD](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/kidneys-bladder-and-prostate/chronic-kidney-disease/)