



DIABETES AND KIDNEY PROBLEMS (NEPHROPATHY)

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is nephropathy?

Nephropathy is a change in the small, delicate blood vessels in the kidneys which, if undetected and untreated, can lead to loss of kidney function and the need for dialysis.

How do I know if I have nephropathy?

Your physician will test your urine for protein at least once per year. This screening test is used to detect any early changes in kidney function. Often there are no changes in how one feels or in the ability to pass urine when nephropathy is present.

What can I do to reduce the risk of developing nephropathy?

- Keep blood glucose well controlled. Discuss your blood glucose goals with your physician.
- Keep blood pressure well controlled. Your physician may recommend medicine to help you meet your blood pressure goals.
- DO NOT SMOKE. Nicotine causes the small blood vessels in the kidney to constrict.
- Follow your dietitian’s recommendation regarding protein intake. Too much protein in your diet (that is, large portions of meat, poultry, fish, etc.) may worsen kidney function.
- Treat bladder and kidney infections promptly.

Where can I learn more about diabetes?

If you have questions you may contact any of the following resources:

Organization	Phone
Greenwich Hospital Weight Loss & Diabetes Center	203.863.2939
Greenwich Hospital Diabetes Educator	203.863.3929
American Diabetes Association	800.232.3472
Web Resources	
American Diabetes Association:	www.diabetes.org
National Kidney Foundation:	www.kidney.org

For more Patient Education Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenwichhospital.org and click on Patient Education