

## CANCER OF KIDNEY

### What is kidney tumor?

A kidney tumor is an abnormal growth of the kidney tissue. All kidney lesions have to be evaluated to be sure that they are not cancers.

### How common is kidney cancer?

Kidney cancers are not very common. They form only 2% of all the cancers detected.

### What risk factors are associated with kidney cancer?

Risk factors for developing kidney cancer are:

- Smoking
- history of kidney cancer in a family member
- kidney failure
- Certain genetic disorders
- asbestos, iron/steel manufacturing

### What are the symptoms for kidney cancer?

Most early kidney tumors do not produce symptoms. They are detected by chance during the investigation/ tests of a totally unrelated problem. Because these get detected in the early stages, such cancers have a very good outlook.

As the cancer increases in size it spread to nearby structures. This may cause pain in the side of abdomen or back and blood in the urine. If cancer spreads beyond the kidney, symptoms depend upon the involved organ. For example if it involves lungs it can cause breathlessness or coughing up of blood, if it involves bones it can cause bone pain or fracture, if it involves brain it can cause fits. Sometimes kidney cancer can causes weight loss, loss of appetite, fever, sweats & high BP.

### How is kidney cancer diagnosed?

The first test on which the kidney tumor is picked up is ultrasound. This needs to be further evaluated by doing

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a CT-scan. In some cases an MRI Scan may be advised.

To evaluate the spread of cancer various blood tests may advised along with chest x-ray, bone scan etc.

### What is the treatment of kidney cancer that appears not to have spread beyond the kidney?

Removal of the tumor along with the entire kidney is the treatment of choice for kidney cancer. In some cases a part of the kidney may be removed along with the tumor. This is especially true if the tumor is small (less than 5 cm) or if patient has one functioning kidney.

### What are the treatment options for tumors that have spread to other organs?

When the tumor has spread to other organs, removal of kidney followed by immunotherapy injections is the main option.

### What is immunotherapy?

Immunotherapy stimulates the immune /defence system of the body to attack cancer. It is hoped that the immune system when stimulated will counter cancer in the same way it does the infection.

### What are the results with immunotherapy?

About 7-10 % patients have complete response and tumour disappears atleast visually. Another 20% have a partial response.

### What are the side effects of immunotherapy?

The most common side effects of immunotherapy are similar to flu symptoms and include fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and fatigue. To be a candidate for immunotherapy, the patient must be in good general condition, that he should be having normally functioning heart, lungs and kidneys. It is also important that the cancer should not have spread to the brain.

### How long shall I need to visit my doctor after operation for kidney cancer?

After treatment for kidney cancer, the patient will need to

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visit his doctor every 3-6 months. He will be advised blood tests, Xrays and sonography. Further tests depend on the exact condition of the disease.

### Can I live a normal life with one kidney?

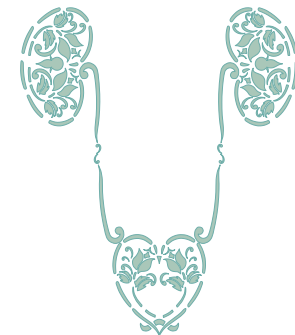
Yes. Most patients will be able to lead a normal life with one kidney. Dialysis is rarely necessary.

### Can the kidney function decline over a period of time?

Yes after operation where a kidney is removed, there may be a gradual decline in the function of the remaining kidney. But the risk of this happening is low.

### After kidney surgery, what can I do to protect my remaining kidney?

In patients with only one kidney, it may be better to avoid contact sports (football, hockey, boxing, soccer, basketball, etc.). Reduce proteins and especially nonvegetarian items in diet. Medicines that may cause kidney damage e.g. pain killers such as aspirin, brufen should be avoided. Some medical conditions, such as hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol can lead to decline in kidney function. Treatment of these conditions may prevent kidney damage.



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