



## Common yet often unknown connection: High blood pressure and chronic kidney disease

Because of how our bodies are naturally engineered, blood pressure and kidney disease are closely intertwined. In fact, high blood pressure can be both a cause and a complication of kidney disease. Here's what you should know.

After the diagnosis of chronic kidney disease, you may notice that your physician closely monitors your blood pressure. Why, you might have wondered? It's because having high blood pressure, also known as hypertension, increases the chance that your kidney disease will progress and could potentially lead to heart problems. By keeping your blood pressure controlled you can help reduce the risk of developing such complications.

### Silent but serious

Too often, people who suffer from high blood pressure don't know they have it: it typically causes no symptoms. The only way to know if your blood pressure is too high is to measure it. That's why your blood pressure should be checked at every visit to your doctor or dialysis centre. For people with chronic kidney disease, your doctor may also test your blood to check your kidney function and







levels of other elements in your blood such as potassium. Since protein in the urine can signal a kidney problem, your physician may check that as well.

### **The kidney–blood pressure connection**

Over time, high blood pressure can damage blood vessels throughout your body. This can reduce the blood supply to important organs like the kidneys. High blood pressure also damages the tiny filtering units in your kidneys and as a consequence the kidneys may stop removing waste products and extra fluid from your blood. This can cause extra fluid in your blood vessels to build up and raise your blood pressure even more. High blood pressure can also be a complication of chronic kidney disease since your kidneys play a key role in keeping your blood pressure in a healthy range. If you have kidney disease, your kidneys are less able to help regulate blood pressure and as a result, blood pressure can creep up.

### **Stick to the plan**

Your doctor will develop a treatment plan for you if you are diagnosed with hypertension. It will likely include making lifestyle changes and taking medications. Remember to follow your physician's instructions and to report any problems or symptoms you have to your doctor. Even after your blood pressure reaches the desired level, it's essential to continue taking your medication as instructed unless your doctor tells you to do otherwise.

### **Educate yourself**

At NephroCare, we encourage you to learn all you can about high blood pressure and chronic kidney disease. As a well-informed patient, you can be directly involved in your care and long-term health. Also, encourage family members to have their blood pressure checked.