

# KIDNEY STONES – A COMMON CONDITION

A diagnosis of kidney stones is, unfortunately, common and painful; however, it is also treatable. With that in mind, this guide has been designed for physicians to educate patients on what kidney stones are, common causes, treatment and prevention.

## 01 | What Are Kidney Stones?

Nephrolithiasis, or Renal Calculi, is more commonly referred to as kidney stones. A kidney stone is a solid lump (from as small as a grain of sand to as large as a pearl) made up of crystals that separate from urine and build up on the inner surfaces of the kidney.

## 02 | Causes & Characteristics

There are several types of kidney stones, each with unique characteristics and causes, the most common of which include:

- **Calcium Stones** – The most common form of kidney stones is caused by certain foods including some fruits, vegetables, nuts and chocolate. May also result from metabolic disorders, intestinal bypass surgery or high doses of Vitamin D.
- **Struvite Stones** – Caused by bacterial infection (UTI or kidney infection) and more common in women, infants and the elderly.
- **Uric Acid Stones** – Caused by dehydration, high-protein diet or gout. There is also a genetic predisposition that may increase the likelihood of uric acid stones.
- **Cystine Stones** – Caused by Cystinuria – a hereditary disorder that causes the kidneys to excrete excessive amounts of certain amino acids.

Many times, kidney stones go unnoticed and resolve themselves; however, if you suffer from the following symptoms, you need to check with your medical provider right away:

- Extreme persistent pain in your back or side
- Blood in your urine
- Fever and chills
- Vomiting
- Urine that smells bad or looks cloudy
- A burning feeling when you urinate

## 03 | Complications & Treatment

If your medical provider suspects kidney stones, they may order a CT scan, ultrasound or abdominal x-rays, as well as a urinalysis and/or blood screening to make a diagnosis and determine what type of kidney stones you may have.

Initial treatment typically includes pain relief via over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medication and an increase in fluid intake. Your medical provider may also prescribe medication to help your body pass the stone(s). If the pain is severe, or if you have an infection and/or are unable to pass the stone(s), your medical provider may recommend surgery.

## 04 | Prevention

To reduce your risk of developing kidney stones, your physician may recommend dietary changes. Drinking plenty of water (and limiting soft drinks) and keeping active are important aspects in maintaining good health, especially if you are prone to kidney stones.

For more information, please visit the National Kidney Foundation at:

[https://www.kidney.org/atoz/atozTopic\\_KidneyStones](https://www.kidney.org/atoz/atozTopic_KidneyStones)

### ***Did You Know?***

*Men are 2 to 3 times more likely than women to have kidney stone problems.*

## References

<http://www.webmd.com/kidney-stones/default.htm>  
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/kidneystones.html#cat11>