Video 1 - Dialysis Overview

Key Notes

Humans have 2 kidneys, which act as filters to remove waste from our bodies and perform other functions as well.

Waste products from bodily functions are filtered through the kidneys and removed through urine.

The kidneys also produce EPO, a hormone that helps the body make red blood cells and other hormones also.

Kidneys may lose function over time for a variety of reasons, including:

- Autoimmune conditions
- High blood sugars with diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Hereditary illnesses like polycystic kidney disease
- Age
- Medicines that are toxic to kidneys
- Severe illness
- Surgery
- Sepsis

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Kidney disease can progress over time if the factors causing the damage to the kidneys continue. The extent of kidney disease is marked by stages.

- In Stage 3 kidney disease, the eGFR or estimated glomerular filtration rate, which measures how well the kidneys are filtering wastes is 30-59, indicating the amount of remaining kidney function is 30-59%.
- In Stage 4, the eGFR is 15-29, indicating the kidneys are functioning at 15-29%.
- Stage 5 is diagnosed when the eGFR is less than 15, with the kidneys functioning at less than 15% of normal.
- Discuss your stage of kidney disease with your nephrologist who is your kidney specialist, to determine at which stage would be appropriate to begin preparing for dialysis, if that is your wish.

The symptoms related to chronic kidney disease are often not noticed until the later stages of kidney disease. They include:

- Fatigue
- Itching
- Gaining or losing weight without trying
- Poor appetite
- Edema, or swelling in the lower legs

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