



Life with one kidney

This information sheet explains about life with only having one kidney and what to expect when your child comes to Great Ormond Street Hospital for monitoring.

Why does my child only have one kidney?

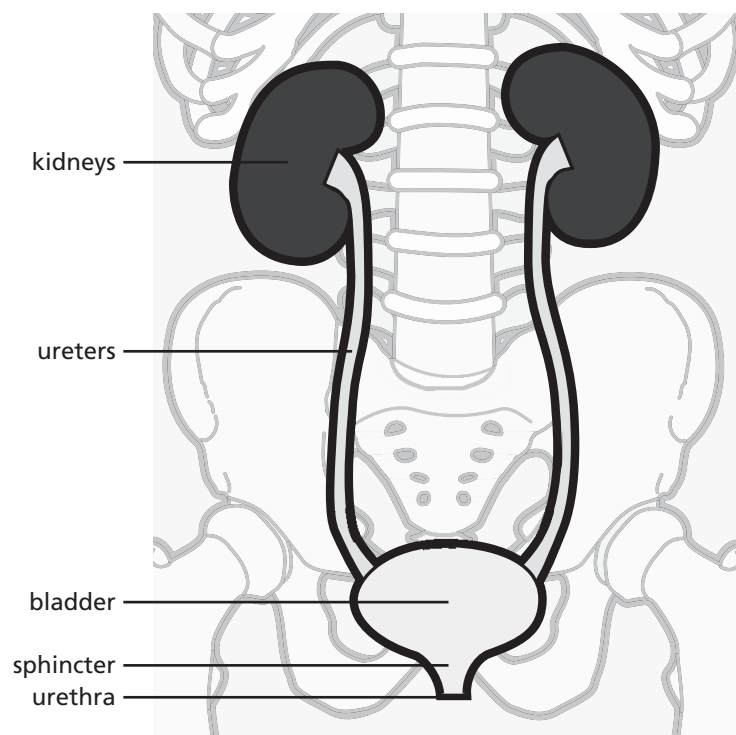
There are several reasons why your child may only have one kidney:

- He or she may have been born with only one normal kidney. In many cases, this is discovered during a routine scan.
- Your child may have had one kidney removed due to disease or an accident.

How does the urinary system work?

The urinary system consists of the kidneys, the bladder and ureters. The kidneys filter the blood to remove waste products and form urine. Urine flows from the kidneys down through the ureters to the bladder. From here it passes through another tube (the urethra) to the outside, when urinating.

The ureters join the bladder at an angle, creating a flap (valve). This prevents urine flowing back from the bladder into the ureters and the kidneys (reflux). It also stops the high pressure created by urination from affecting the kidneys. This valve helps to get rid of the urine in the bladder in one go, as the urine cannot travel to anywhere else.



Why does my child need regular check ups?

When a child is born with one normal kidney, he or she should have regular check ups with a specialist doctor, to make sure that the kidney is growing normally.

What are the risks of only having one kidney?

Life with one kidney should not be significantly different to life with two kidneys. Studies have found that people who have only one normal kidney are no more likely to develop kidney failure.



Will my child need to follow a special diet?

Your child will not have to restrict his or her diet unless the remaining kidney is not completely normal. In this case, the amount of salt and protein your child eats may need to be decreased. Your doctor will tell you if this is necessary. No other special diets are needed.

Will my child be able to participate in sports?

Your child need not restrict his or her activities. However, some doctors believe that children with one kidney should avoid sports, which involve a lot of body contact, like rugby or boxing.

Support groups

National Kidney Federation

6 Stanley Street, Worksop S81 7HX

Tel: 0845 601 0209 Helpline

Email: nkf@kidney.org.uk

Web: www.kidney.org.uk

Kidney Research UK

King's Chambers, Priestgate

Peterborough PE1 1FG

Tel 0845 070 7601

e-mail: helpline@nkrf.org.uk

Web: www.nkrf.org.uk

British Kidney Patient Association

Bordon GU35 9JZ

Tel 01420 472021/2

Compiled by the Renal Team in collaboration with the Patient Information Group.

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