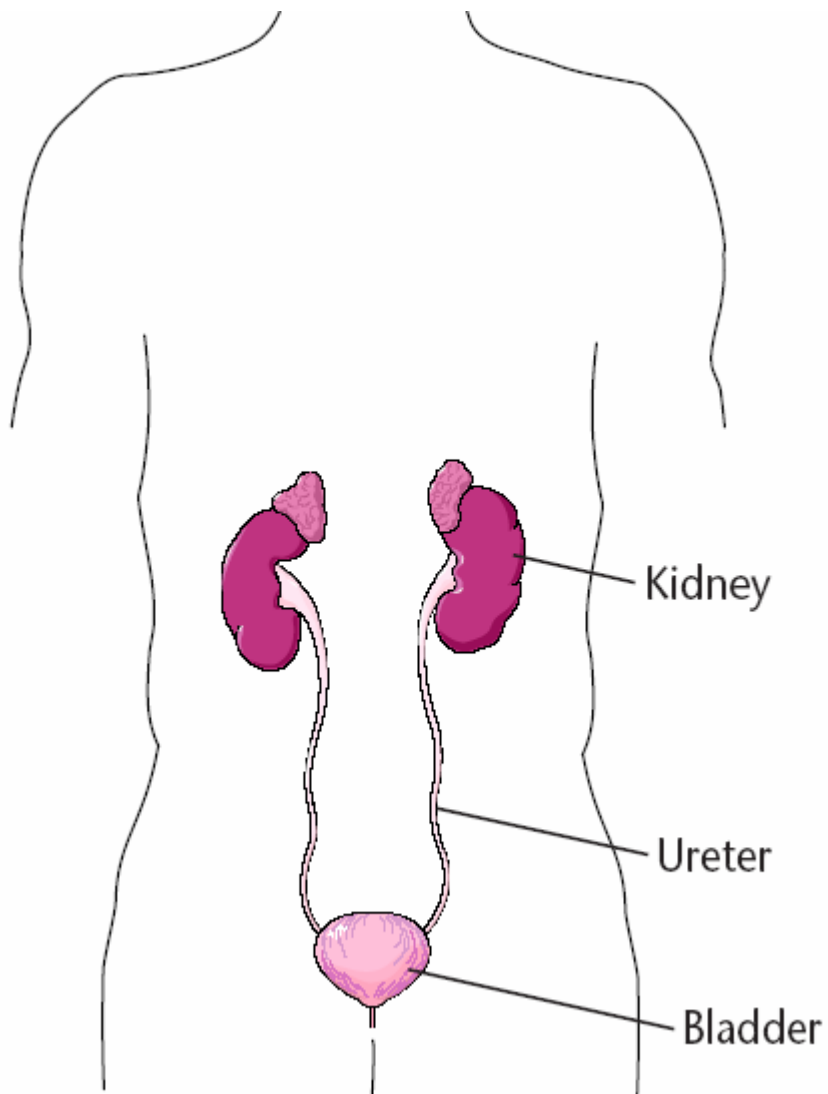


How Do Your Kidneys Work?

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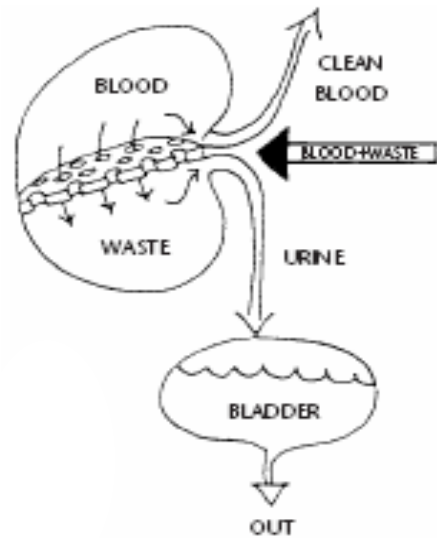
Where are the kidneys?

- You have 2 kidneys.
- A kidney is about the size of a fist.
- They are shaped like a kidney bean and are attached to your blood system by two blood vessels called renal arteries.
- Each kidney is attached to the bladder by a tube called a ureter. Urine is made in the kidneys and stored in the bladder.



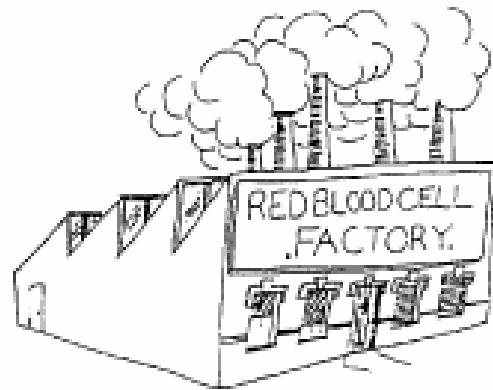
What the kidneys do:

- Kidneys have the vital job of cleaning the blood and removing extra fluid.



- They filter out waste products and medications from the blood.

- They help control blood pressure and red blood cell production.



- They keep your body chemicals and fluid in balance and keep bones strong.

What is kidney failure?

- Kidney failure occurs when the kidneys stop working or when the level of working is less than 10%.
- Fluids and chemical wastes build up in the body.
- The 2 types of kidney failure are acute and chronic.

Acute kidney failure occurs:

- When the kidneys suddenly stop working - often this is temporary. The cause may be disease, injury, major surgery, or toxic agents.

Chronic kidney failure occurs:

- When the kidneys are slowly destroyed by disease.

What causes kidney failure?

- Diabetes
- Inflammation
- Untreated high blood pressure
- Hereditary conditions - diseases passed on through families
- Chronic infection
- Blockage of renal arteries or ureters
- Accidents

What happens when kidneys fail?

When your kidneys fail, important jobs are not carried out properly inside the body. The result is that you stop feeling healthy and strong.

Looking for more information on this topic?

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazine articles and online health information. For a list of public libraries in Nova Scotia go to [HTTP://publiclibraries.ns.ca](http://publiclibraries.ns.ca)

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