

How Long-Term Health Problems Are Related to Each Other



All parts of your body work together to keep you healthy. Since they are all connected, some long-term health problems that affect one part of your body can affect other parts of your body, as well.

Common health problems that can affect more than one part of your body include:

- Diabetes
- Kidney disease
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease

How do these long-term health problems affect each other?



Diabetes raises your risk for kidney disease and heart disease. When you have high blood sugar, it:

- Damages blood vessels and nerves in your heart. This increases your risk for heart disease.
- Harms the small blood vessels in your kidneys. This stops them from cleaning your blood as they should.



Kidney disease adds stress to your heart. When kidneys stop working well:

- Extra toxins and fluid can build up and harm other organs.
- It puts extra stress on your heart. This makes it harder for it to move blood through your body.



High blood pressure (hypertension) causes kidney damage and a higher risk of heart disease. When you have high blood pressure, it damages blood vessels throughout your body which:

- Damages your kidneys. This can lead to kidney disease.
- Causes the heart to work harder. This can lead to heart disease.



Heart disease can lead to high blood pressure and kidney disease. When your heart struggles to pump enough blood for your body, it:

- Makes your heart pump harder to get your blood where it needs to go. This extra effort can raise your blood pressure.
- Harms your kidneys. This can lead to kidney disease.

If I manage one long-term health problem, can it improve or prevent other related problems?

Yes! When you and your doctor take steps to improve one health problem, it can improve or even prevent others. For example, if you bring down your blood pressure with medicine and a low-salt diet, it can also bring down your risk of kidney and heart disease. That is why it is so important to manage your long-term health problems. Not only will you feel better, but you will also improve or prevent other problems along the way.

What can I do to manage these long-term health problems?

If you have one or more of these health problems, and have questions:



- Talk to your doctor. They can help you take steps to improve any health problems you have.
- Learn more about what you can do with these resources. **Scan this QR code** to learn more.

