

Why am I attending this Clinic?

Your kidneys are not working effectively. This means they cannot do their usual jobs such as:

- removing water and waste products from your blood;
- regulating your blood pressure;
- keeping your bones strong; and
- helping you make red blood cells.

Your kidney disease may have happened suddenly, or over a period of time. This is usually detected from blood and urine tests even before you have any symptoms.

What is a Low Clearance Clinic?

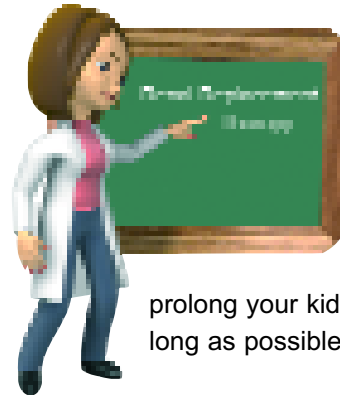
There are different stages of **Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)**.

The Low Clearance Clinic looks after patients at CKD stages 4-5, whose kidneys are working at less than 30% of normal.

At this clinic we hope to slow and stabilise this decline, but some people with CKD may eventually need **Renal Replacement Therapy (RRT)**.

This means some patients will need dialysis or a kidney transplant to do the work of their failing kidneys.

Aims of the Low Clearance Clinic



- To ensure you are receiving the most appropriate treatment to slow the decline and prolong your kidney function for as long as possible.
- To manage the side effects of CKD and improve your symptoms.
- To provide education and advice that enables you to make an informed decision about RRT options if needed.
- To ensure timely and appropriate referral for all interventions in the preparation for a dialysis therapy.
- To support and provide the appropriate care to those who do not want RRT.

Who will I see at the Low Clearance Clinic?

Specialist Renal Doctors

You will be reviewed at clinic at regular intervals by Consultant Nephrologists (Kidney Specialists) and Specialist Renal Doctors who will assess and manage your renal symptoms and medications. If your kidney disease stabilises, you may be transferred back to your GP's care.



Chronic Renal Nurse Specialist

Works along with the medical team in managing areas of your treatment by ensuring good renal health management. Provides information and support, so that you can make informed decisions regarding your treatment plan. The Renal Nurse Specialist will support and prepare patients and their families through this decision.

Renal Dietitian

Provides specialist renal dietary advice to help reduce the impact CKD has on your general health. Some people with CKD may find their appetite reduced or feel nauseated or experience a troublesome itch. Patients may also find they have increasing fluid retention (oedema). The dietitian can give you advice on how to cope with your dietary restrictions.



Renal Pharmacist

If needed, you can also arrange to see the Renal Pharmacist to discuss your medication therapy and/or provide information and prescribe your Erythropoietin (EPO) therapy.



Renal Social Worker

Can help you with your benefits and allowances and other social circumstances that you may need assistance with.

What should I bring to my clinic appointment?

- A list of your current medications
- A record of your blood pressure readings (if you have one)
- Your EPO / Anaemia record card (if you are on EPO therapy)
- An update on your Hepatitis vaccinations (if applicable)
- A urine sample

How can I prolong my kidney function?

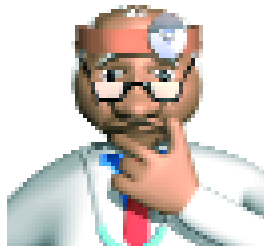
Reducing high blood pressure by:

- Taking the medications as prescribed 
- Avoiding salt and salty foods in your diet
- Stop smoking 
- Losing excess weight
- Keeping as active as possible 
- If you have diabetes, aim for good blood sugar control
- Attending your renal clinic as per appointment and adhering to medical advice

What will happen if my kidneys fail?

As your kidneys' function declines, the waste materials and extra fluid in your body can make you ill. At the appropriate time, RRT options will be discussed with you and your family by the Renal Nurse Specialist.

Is it better to have thought about Renal Replacement Therapy (RRT) options and have a Pre-Dialysis Plan in place?



Renal Replacement Therapy (RRT) options available

Haemodialysis

A hospital treatment or home

Peritoneal Dialysis

Done at home by patient and/or family

Transplant

Needs medical assessment

Conservative Management

Deciding not to undertake dialysis

Please ask for the appropriate leaflets on the above.

What if I do not want dialysis?

If you decide not to opt for a dialysis option, you will still be seen by the Renal Team and your kidney disease will be managed between the Renal Doctors and your GP.

Adjusting to life with kidney failure

Keep a positive attitude

This allows you to see all the possibilities when they may not be obvious to you.

Find out all you can at the low clearance clinic

Write down specific questions you want answers for. Bring a relative or friend with you.

Build up a good support system

Inform the people that are important to you about your kidney condition so they can support you if you are worried.

Take responsibility

Take an active role in your own wellbeing, both physically and emotionally. The medical staff and your family can help you but making the choice is up to you.

Follow your treatment plan

Work with the renal team to decide which treatment option is best for you. It will be in your interest to have a treatment plan in place.

Contact numbers for the renal team

Louise Sloan, Renal Nurse Specialist
028 9442 4929

Joanne McKee, Renal Dietitian
028 9442 4152

Maire McManus, Renal Pharmacist
028 9442 4000/Bleep 5390

Renal Secretaries
028 9442 4889/4173

Renal Outpatients
028 9442 4165

If you have any further questions, please do not
hesitate to ask a member of staff.

email: info@northerntrust.hscni.net

**This document is available, on request,
in accessible formats, including Braille, disk,
audio cassette and minority languages.**



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Northern Health
and Social Care Trust

**Information for patients
with kidney disease
attending the
Low Clearance Clinic**