Protecting Your Kidney

How is Kidney Function Measured?
Kidney function is best measured by a blood test called ‘creatinine.’ Your doctor will use it to calculate your ‘GFR’ or ‘Glomerular Filtration Rate’ which is measured in milliters per minute per 1.73 meters squared. (We don’t know why 1.73m$^2$ was chosen either!).

A normal GFR is over 90. You still might need to take extra steps to protect your kidney even if your GFR is over 90 in cases where your kidneys have had an injury in the past or if you were born with less than two normally functioning kidneys.

Your GFR today is ________________ mL/min/1.73m$^2$.

What Can I Do to Preserve Kidney Function?

1. Avoid medications that injure the kidney.
   - Ibuprofen (motrin), naproxen, and other Non-steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)
   - Certain IV medications used in hospitals

2. Prevent dehydration.
   - Seek medical attention early for vomiting and diarrhea.
   - Drink lots of fluid during sporting events and practices.

3. Maintain a normal weight and get at least 90 minutes of aerobic exercise per week.

4. Maintain normal blood pressure.

5. Don’t eat a lot of sodium (salt) in your diet.

6. Don’t smoke.

7. Keep your cholesterol in check.

8. For girls when they grow up and are ready to have children of their own, they should have their kidney function followed closely by an obstetrician.

9. If your kidney function is lower than 90 mL/min/1.73m$^2$, your doctor may prescribe an Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitor or an Angiotensin Receptor Blocker (ARB), medications that are powerful protectors of kidney function.

If you have other questions, be sure to ask your doctor. The Walter Reed pediatric nephrology service can be contacted 24/7 by email (renal@nccpeds.com), using RelayHealth, or by pager (1-866-295-4913 pin 1654454).