



# What to Expect at Your First Renal (Nephrology) Outpatient Appointment

This leaflet explains more about your renal outpatient appointment. If you have any questions, please contact us (details at the end of this leaflet).

## Nephrology Clinic

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Renal medicine, or nephrology, is the branch of medicine that involves the diagnosis and treatment of people with diseases and conditions of the kidneys.

Patients are often referred to the nephrology clinic by their general practitioner (GP), or by another medical team.

The clinic is run on a Thursday morning in the Outpatient building, Christchurch Hospital.

The aim of the Nephrology clinic is to find the cause of any kidney related problems and to try to prevent them from getting worse.

## Nephrology team

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There are 6 kidney specialist doctors, called nephrologists, who along with one trainee specialist doctor make up the medical team. A nephrologist is a kidney expert that diagnoses and treats kidney diseases. There is also a Clinical Nurse Specialist.

## Medical Students

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Christchurch hospital is a teaching hospital and medical students may be present during your appointment. You will be always be asked if you are happy with this. It is not a problem if you would prefer them not to be present, they will be asked to leave the room during your appointment.

## Research

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Christchurch Nephrology Department recognises the importance of high-quality research in order to improve healthcare. Research is often undertaken with other CDHB departments, the University of Otago, primary care and New Zealand Clinical Trials. We have many different research studies taking place. At some point you may be invited to participate in a research study.

Participation in a research study is **always voluntary** and not taking part has no impact on the care you will receive.

If you do not wish to be approached about being a participant in a clinical trial, please do let us know either at your clinic visit or by calling the Clinical Nurse specialist (details at the end of this leaflet).

## How can I prepare for my appointment?

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We would encourage you to bring a support person with you to your appointment as there is often a lot of information to absorb.

Please bring:

- a list of all the medications you are taking (including: any non-prescription drugs you take, such as cold medication, pain relievers, vitamin supplements, herbal and natural health products)
- a list of questions you may wish to ask the doctor.
- if you check your blood pressure at home, bring the record of measurements with you.
- It is also good to know your family history (such as your parents, any brothers or sisters' health).

## Check your appointment details

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Your appointment letter will contain details, such as the date, time and where you need to go.

## Blood tests before your appointment

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With your appointment letter you will also receive a laboratory test request form for you to have blood and urine tests. Please do these tests about a week before your appointment. These test results help the doctors assess your kidneys.

## Changing or cancelling your appointment

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If you wish to change or cancel your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible by telephoning the nephrology department on: (03) 364 0655. This enables us to offer your appointment to someone else. We will try to schedule another appointment for you. Please be aware that due to the demand on our clinics there may be a delay until you can be rescheduled.

## Interpretation and sign language

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If you need an interpreter or sign language services, please contact us before your appointment using the contact details below.

## Failure to attend for your appointment

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If you fail to keep your appointment and do not contact the nephrology department you may not be offered another appointment. Your GP will be notified.

## Christchurch outpatient entry and car parking

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Please refer to the enclosed parking information.

## Appointment time

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Please arrive on time for your appointment.

## Arriving at your appointment

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Please report to the reception staff on your arrival. The reception staff will check your details and then direct you to a waiting area. A nurse will call you and measure your height and weight. This helps the doctor work out how well your kidneys are working. You will then be asked to wait until you are called for your appointment with the doctor.

## Waiting times

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Our team make every effort to ensure that you are seen on time. However, outpatient services are very busy and sometimes a longer wait is unavoidable. Please ensure that you allow plenty of time for your visit. Some appointments take longer than expected or the doctor may be called away to an emergency. We are aware of how frustrating it is to be kept waiting and our team will do their best to keep you informed of any delays to your appointment.

## What will happen at your appointment ?

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The doctor will introduce themselves and will then ask questions about your health and medical history. Your blood pressure and heart rate will be taken and usually you will have a physical examination.

Treatment options and recommendations will be discussed with you and you will be advised of any extra tests you may need. Your appointment is likely to last 45 minutes.

During your appointment you will have plenty of opportunities to ask any questions you may have.

At the end of each clinic, a meeting is held where all patients are discussed. This ensures all team members are aware of how you are doing.

## After your appointment

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Further tests and / or investigations may be required following your appointment to help work out the cause of your kidney problems. These will be discussed with you and may include: additional blood tests, renal ultrasound, kidney biopsy.

You will be advised if you will need to return for future nephrology clinics appointments. If you have concerns about your kidneys or your general health before your next appointment with us, you should see your GP. Your GP is very important for your health care. Your GP can contact us for advice about your kidneys or they can request we see you sooner if they are concerned about you.

The kidney doctors are not able to take phone calls or respond to emails directly from patients. They are happy to provide repeat prescriptions while seeing you in clinic. You will need to see your GP for repeat prescriptions at other times.

## Contact details

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The Clinical Nurse Specialist can be contacted out of clinic hours on: **(03) 364 0197**

Nephrology department: **(03) 364 0655**

For more information about:

- hospital and specialist services, go to [www.cdhb.health.nz](http://www.cdhb.health.nz)
- your health and medication, go to [www.healthinfo.org.nz](http://www.healthinfo.org.nz) and [www.healthnavigator.org.nz](http://www.healthnavigator.org.nz)

## How to get to Christchurch Outpatients

Please see attached information.

### Map

