# Polycystic Kidney Disease (Child)

Polycystic kidney disease is a disease in which the kidneys are made up of many small cysts. These cysts hurt the *function* (how the kidneys work) of the kidneys. This disease is often discovered shortly after birth.

**In childhood, problems caused include:**

- High blood pressure (*hypertension*)
- *Anemia* (you don't have enough healthy red blood cells to carry adequate oxygen to your tissues)
- *Flank Pain* (pain in middle and side of back below ribs)
- Blood in the urine
- Kidney failure
- Kidney stones
- Increased urination at night
- Liver disease

## DIAGNOSIS

Often polycystic kidney disease may be suspected by your attending caregiver from history (asking what is wrong) and physical exam (caregiver checks you over). Other studies such as ultrasound, CT scan or MRI scan may be done. The CT and MRI are specialized X-rays which help your caregiver be more sure about what is going on. Sometimes chromosome studies are done to see if you have the genes necessary to have polycystic kidneys. Sometimes other members of the family will also be studied to see if future treatment may be needed or if closer follow up is necessary.

## TREATMENT

- There is no treatment at this time to keep the cysts from forming or getting larger.
- Medications are available to treat the high blood pressure and this is done to slow down further damage to the kidneys.
- All infections must be treated immediately.
- Sometimes cysts need to be drained with a needle or trochar if they are large and causing pressure on other organs and further destroying kidney tissue. This may require surgery.
- Often kidney failure occurs in childhood and then dialysis or transplantation is used to treat the illness. Most transplant patients live relatively long and normal lives with proper treatment.

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