

Glossary Terms

abdomen:

Also referred to as the belly. It is the part of the body that contains all of the internal structures between the chest and the pelvis.

absorptive hypercalciuria:

Causes unabsorbed fatty acids to combine with calcium. This causes too much oxalate to be absorbed by the intestines.

bladder:

The bladder is a thick muscular balloon-shaped pouch in which urine is stored before being discharged through the urethra.

bowel:

Another word for intestines or colon.

calcium:

A mineral that the body needs for strong bones and teeth. Calcium may form stones in the kidney.

calculi:

Also known as a stone. Abnormal hard formation of minerals in the body.

chronic:

Lasting a long time. Chronic diseases develop slowly. Chronic renal (kidney) failure may develop over many years and lead to end-stage renal (kidney) disease.

citrate:

A salt of citric acid.

creatinine:

A waste product from meat protein in the diet and from the muscles of the body. Creatinine is removed from blood by the kidneys; as kidney disease progresses, the level of creatine in the blood increases.

crystals:

Solids formed by a repeating, three-dimensional pattern of atoms, ions or molecules.

cutaneous:

Relating to the skin.

cyst:

An abnormal sac containing gas, fluid or a semisolid material. Cysts may form in kidneys or other parts of the body.

cystine:

An amino acid found in blood and urine. Amino acids are building blocks of protein.

cystine stone:

A rare form of kidney stone consisting of the amino acid cystine.

cystinuria:

A condition in which urine contains high levels of the amino acid cystine. If cystine does not dissolve in the urine, it can build up to form kidney stones.

diagnosis:

The process by which a doctor determines what disease or condition a patient has by studying the patient's symptoms and medical history, and analyzing any tests performed (e.g., blood tests, urine tests, brain scans, etc.).

diuretic:

A drug that increases the amount of water in the urine, removing excess water from the body.

endocrine:

Relating to glands that secrete hormones internally directly into the lymph nodes or bloodstream.

ESWL:

Also known as extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy. A non-surgical procedure using shock waves to break up kidney stones.

gene:

The basic unit capable of transmitting characteristics from one generation to the next.

groin:

The area where the upper thigh meets the lower abdomen.

hormone:

A natural chemical produced in one part of the body and released into the blood to trigger or regulate particular functions of the body. Antidiuretic hormone tells the kidneys to slow down urine production.

hypercalciuria:

Abnormally large amounts of calcium in the urine.

hyperoxaluria:

Unusually large amounts of oxalate in the urine, leading to kidney stones.

hyperparathyroidism:

Condition where the four pea-sized glands behind the thyroid gland at the front of your neck makes too much of the hormone called parathyroid hormone (PTH) that keeps the right levels of calcium in your blood and bones.

hyperuricosuria:

Excess excretion of uric acid in the urine.

infection:

A condition resulting from the presence of bacteria or other microorganisms.

inflammation:

Swelling, redness, heat and/or pain produced in the area of the body as a result of irritation, injury or infection.

intestine:

The part of the digestive system between the stomach and the anus that digests and absorbs food and water.

intravenous:

Also referred to as IV. Existing or occurring inside a vein.

ions:

Electrically charged atoms.

IV:

Also referred to as intravenous. Existing or occurring inside a vein.

IVP:

Also referred to as intravenous pyelogram, intravenous urography or excretory urogram. An X-ray of the urinary tract. A dye is injected to make urine visible on the X-ray and show any blockage in the urinary tract.

kidney:

One of two bean-shaped organs that filter wastes from the blood and discharge these waste products in urine. The kidneys are located on either side at the level of the 12th ribs toward the back. The kidneys send urine to the bladder through tubes called ureters.

kidney stone:

A stone that develops from crystals that form in urine and build up on the inner surfaces of the kidney, in the renal pelvis or in the ureters. (Also see nephrolithiasis.)

kidneys:

One of two bean-shaped organs that filter wastes from the blood and discharge these waste products in urine. The kidneys are located on either side at the level of the 12th ribs toward the back. The kidneys send urine to the bladder through tubes called ureters.

lithotripsy:

A method of breaking up kidney stones using shock waves or other means.

ostomy:

A surgical procedure such as a colostomy or ileostomy, in which an artificial opening for excreting waste matter is created.

oxalate:

A chemical that combines with calcium in urine to form the most common type of kidney stone (calcium oxalate stone).

pelvis:

The bowl-shaped bone that supports the spine and holds up the digestive, urinary, and reproductive organs. The legs connect to the body at the pelvis.

penis:

The male organ used for urination and sex.

percutaneous:

To place or perform a procedure underneath the skin. No incision (cutting) is necessary.

primary hyperoxaluria:

A rare metabolic disease caused by the liver making too much oxalic acid that is excreted in the urine of the affected person.

prostate:

A walnut-shaped gland in men that surrounds the urethra at the neck of the bladder. The prostate supplies fluid that goes into semen.

shock wave lithotripsy:

Also referred to as SWL. High energy shock waves, in conjunction with X-ray and/or ultrasound, are focused on kidney or ureteral stones and cause the stone to break into tiny pieces which pass easily out of the body during urination.

sonogram:

Also referred to as a ultrasound. A technique that bounces painless sound waves off organs to create an image of their structure to detect abnormalities.

stone:

Small hard mass of mineral material formed in an organ.

stone disease:

An abnormal concretion of mineral salts around organic material found especially in hollow organs or ducts.

stricture:

Abnormal narrowing of a body passage.

stricture disease:

Condition where there is an abnormal narrowing of a body opening.

SWL:

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thyroid:

An endocrine gland located in the neck that secretes the hormones responsible for controlling metabolism and growth.

urate:

A salt of uric acid.

ureter:

One of two tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder.

ureters:

Tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder.

urethra:

A tube that carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body. In males, the urethra serves as the channel through which semen is ejaculated and it extends from the bladder to the tip of the penis. In females, the urethra is much shorter than in males.

urge:

Strong desire to urinate.

uric:

Relating to urine.

uric acid:

A slightly soluble acid present in urine and blood produced by the body's breakdown of waste nitrogenous substances.

uric acid stone:

A kidney stone that may result from animal protein in the diet. When the body breaks down this protein, uric acid levels rise and can form stones.

uricosuria:

Excessive amounts of uric acid in the urine.

urinary:

Relating to urine.

urinary tract:

The system that takes wastes from the blood and carries them out of the body in the form of urine. Passageway from the kidneys to the ureters, bladder and urethra.

urinary tract infection:

Also referred to as UTI. An illness caused by harmful bacteria, viruses or yeast growing in the urinary tract.

urinate:

To release urine from the bladder to the outside. Also referred to as void.

urination:

The passing of urine.

urine:

Liquid waste product filtered from the blood by the kidneys, stored in the bladder and expelled from the body through the urethra by the act of urinating (voiding). About 96 percent of which is water and the rest waste products.

urologist:

A doctor who specializes in diseases of the male and female urinary systems and the male reproductive system. [Click here](#) to learn more about urologists. (*Download the free Acrobat reader.*)

vas:

Also referred to as vas deferens. The cordlike structure that carries sperm from the testicle to the urethra.