



MYTH VS. FACT: Understanding How Your Body is Connected

Cardiovascular-Kidney-Metabolic (CKM) Syndrome

CKM syndrome is a health condition where problems with your heart, kidneys, and metabolism (how your body uses energy) are closely connected. These issues often happen together and can make each other worse over time.



HOW TO PLAY:

Read each statement. Decide whether it's a Myth or a Fact—then read the explanation to learn more about how your body systems are connected.

☒ **MYTH** **OR** ☒ **FACT**

1

Heart health has nothing to do with kidney health.

☐ **MYTH**

☐ **FACT**

2

CKM syndrome only happens when someone has diabetes.

☐ **MYTH**

☐ **FACT**

3

My lifestyle choices can't affect my kidney function.

☐ **MYTH**

☐ **FACT**

4

CKM syndrome is one condition, but it includes many body systems.

☐ **MYTH**

☐ **FACT**

5

It's possible to feel fine even if CKM syndrome is developing.

☐ **MYTH**

☐ **FACT**

6

Improving one area of health won't help the others.

☐ **MYTH**

☐ **FACT**

7

CKM syndrome only affects older adults.

☐ **MYTH**

☐ **FACT**

8

Mental health and stress have no effect on heart or kidney health.

☐ **MYTH**

☐ **FACT**

9

CKM syndrome can be managed with the right tools and support.

☐ **MYTH**

☐ **FACT**

MYTH VS FACT ANSWERS

- 1**  **MYTH:**
The heart and kidneys work closely together to maintain your body's balance of fluids, electrolytes, and blood pressure. When one isn't working normally, the other can be affected. For example, high blood pressure can damage both the heart and kidneys over time.
- 2**  **MYTH:**
While diabetes is a risk factor of CKM syndrome, it can also develop in people who have heart disease (e.g., heart failure or high blood pressure), kidney disease, or metabolic risk factors (e.g., obesity, high blood glucose (blood sugar), or high cholesterol).
- 3**  **MYTH:**
Nutrition, physical activity, hydration, and even sleep habits all impact kidney health. Not managing high blood sugar or blood pressure can silently harm the kidneys over time.
- 4**  **FACT:**
CKM syndrome includes many body systems such as the cardiovascular systems (heart & blood vessels), kidneys, and metabolic system (blood sugar, cholesterol, and weight regulation). CKM syndrome reflects how problems with any of those systems are all connected and often worsen together.
- 5**  **FACT:**
CKM syndrome can begin silently. People may feel perfectly fine because they don't feel symptoms right away. That's why regular checkups (including blood pressure, cholesterol, body mass index (BMI), waist circumference, kidney function, and A1C tests) are so important.
- 6**  **MYTH:**
Taking steps in one area, like lowering blood pressure, improving nutrition, or getting more active, can benefit your entire CKM health. Everything is connected!
- 7**  **MYTH:**
While risk increases with age, CKM syndrome can progress in younger adults, especially those with conditions like being overweight, high blood pressure, or abnormal cholesterol.
- 8**  **MYTH:**
Chronic stress, depression, and anxiety can have a powerful effect on your heart and kidney health. This can raise blood pressure, disrupt sleep, increase inflammation, and even change how your body uses insulin, all contributing to CKM risk.
- 9**  **FACT:**
You have the power to manage your risk for CKM syndrome. With the right care plan, including medications, lifestyle changes, and education, many people can slow or even reverse the effects of CKM syndrome.

Your body works as a team. When one part struggles, other parts may suffer. When you take care of one system, you affect your whole health. That's the power of understanding CKM syndrome.

Learn more at heart.org/myCKMhealth

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