



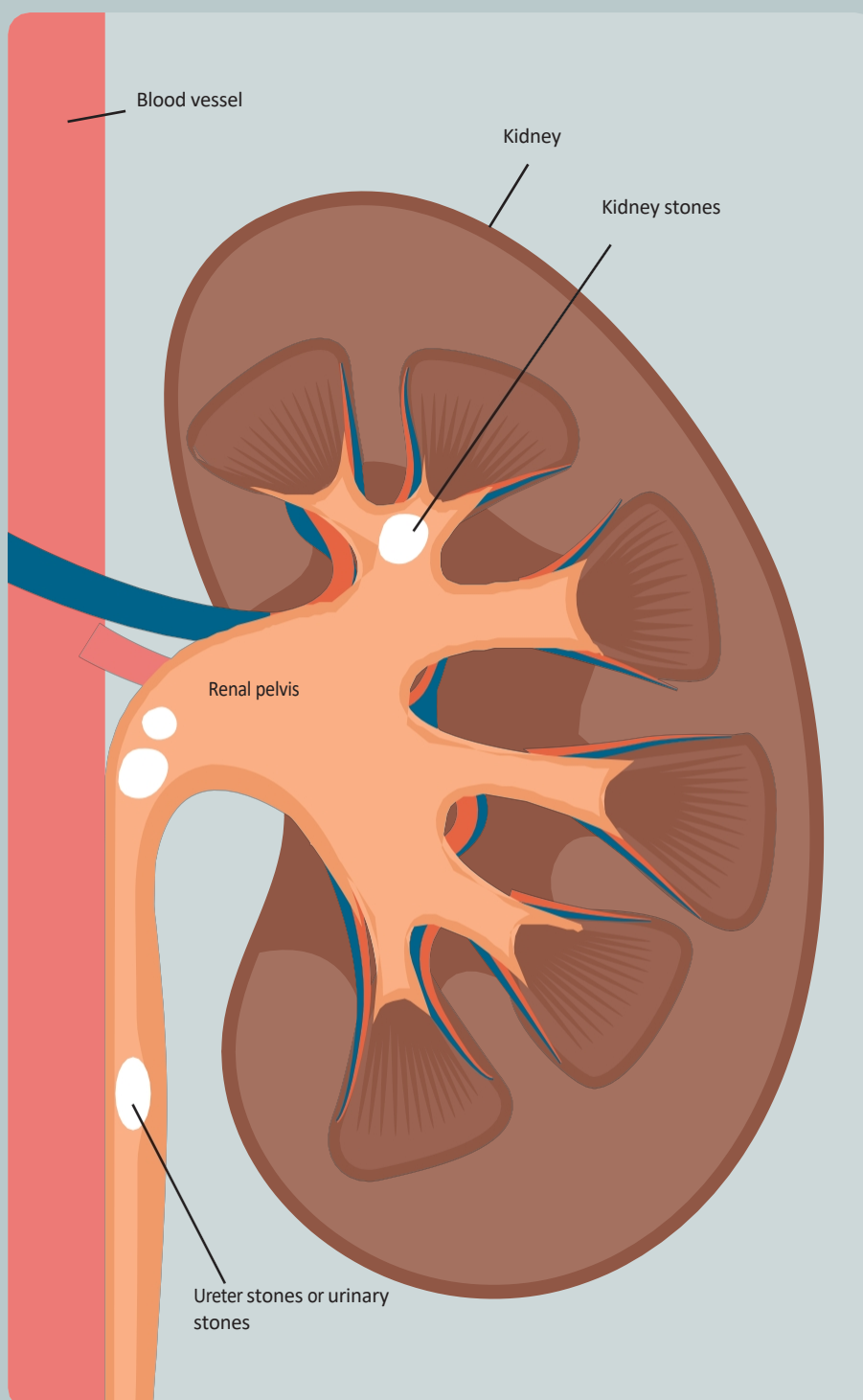
Hellish pain caused by kidney stones:

5 tips to help your care client

Has one of your care clients ever had renal colic? Then you know that those affected usually suffer from severe pain. In this article, you will learn what you should bear in mind when caring for a client who suffers from kidney stones, ureter stones or urinary stones.

Kidney, ureter or urinary stones

Kidney stones are small, solid deposits that form in the renal pelvis. They consist of mineral salts that are normally dissolved in urine and flushed out of the body. When the concentration is too high, they form crystals, on the surface of which more and more salts are deposited, resulting in stones of varying sizes. If these stones enter the ureter, they are referred to as ureteral or urinary stones.

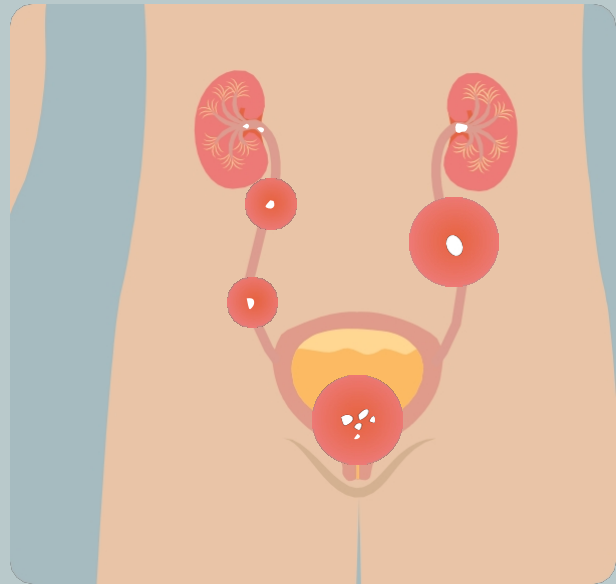




Not every stone causes pain

Whether kidney stones, ureter stones or urinary stones cause symptoms depends on the exact location and size of the stone.

- **Small stones** quickly pass from the renal pelvis into the ureter and from there to the bladder. In doing so, they irritate the renal pelvis and the inner walls of the ureter. This can lead to localised bleeding, which discolours the urine. Symptoms can often be alleviated with painkillers, adequate fluid intake and patience until the stones are passed.
- **Larger stones** can get stuck at the exit of the renal pelvis or move slowly through the ureter. This causes severe pain, urinary retention and renal colic. Depending on their size, medications that relax the muscles can help the stones to pass. However, sometimes it is necessary to break them up using sound waves or surgery.



These symptoms occur

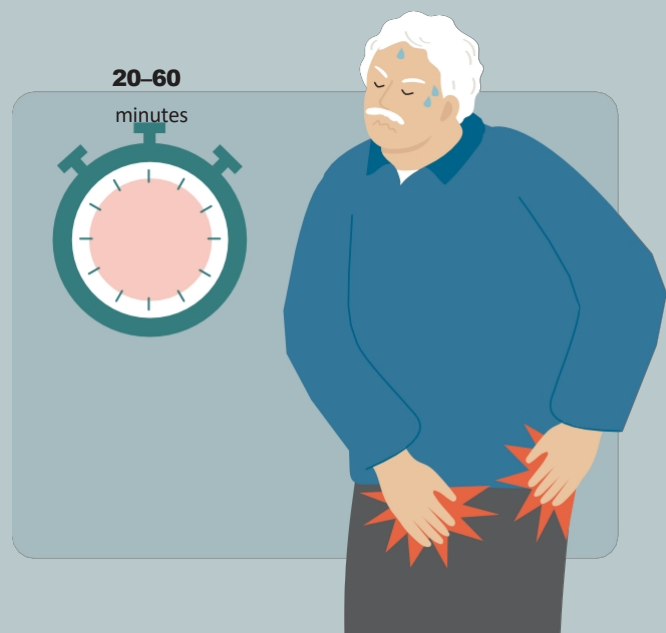
- Many people have kidney stones that cause no discomfort. Sometimes, those affected only feel a slight pulling sensation in the kidney area (often in the flanks) without immediately associating this with a stone. Only when a stone blocks the renal pelvis or moves through the ureter does it become noticeable.
- The main symptom is pain, ranging from mild discomfort to severe, cramp-like pain. Depending on the location of the stone, the pain may occur in the lower abdomen, stomach, back or flanks.



Renal colic: severe pain

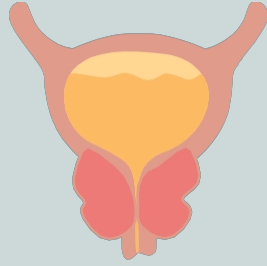
The pain becomes particularly severe when a stone passes through a narrow point in the ureter, such as the transition from the renal pelvis to the ureter or at the entrance to the bladder. Typical symptoms include sudden, attack-like pain in the side, which can radiate to the lower abdomen. This so-called renal colic can last for 20–60 minutes.

NOTE: Many symptoms can also indicate other conditions such as urinary tract infections, renal insufficiency or incipient incontinence.

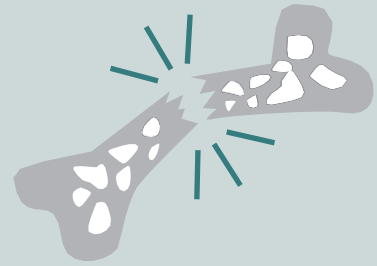


These are the risk factors for kidney stones

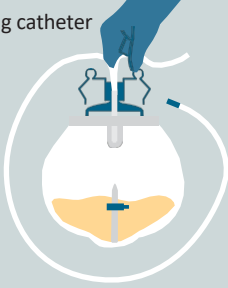
Urinary flow disorders
e.g. due to prostate
enlargement,
neurogenic bladder
dysfunction, neurological
diseases (e.g. MS),
urinary tract infection



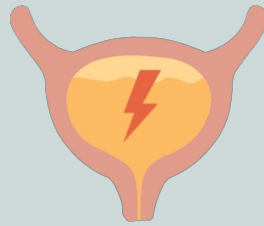
Osteoporosis with
increased calcium
release from the
bones into the
blood



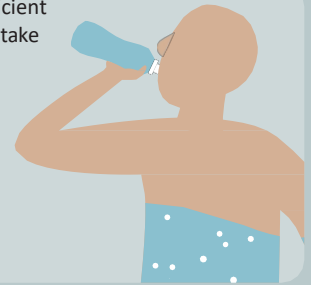
Indwelling catheter



Bladder injuries



Insufficient
fluid intake



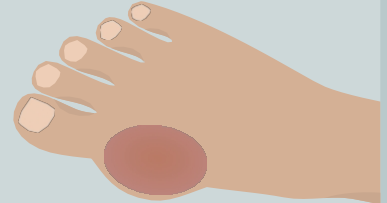
Unbalanced diet with too much
meat and dairy products



Excessive
magnesium intake



Gout



These are the symptoms of kidney stones

- Blood in the urine
- Low urine output if the stone obstructs the flow of urine
- Sudden and unbearable pain in the kidney area, often wave-like and cramp-like
- Pain sometimes radiates to the genitals, bladder and back.
- Curved posture
- Urinary urgency, painful dripping of urine
- Pressure pain in the kidney area
- Headaches
- Loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, constipation
- Increased urge to move
- Pain when urinating





The flanks – a typical area of pain

The flanks are the lateral areas of the back between the lower ribs and the iliac crest. This is where the kidneys are located. Pain in this region is therefore often associated with kidney diseases such as stones, infections or inflammation. However, it can also have muscular or orthopaedic causes.

These 5 measures will help your care recipient

- 1 Take pain seriously:** In the event of colicky symptoms, immediately inform a nurse or the PDL, who will contact the doctor. The doctor will decide whether your care recipient should be admitted to hospital or whether painkillers and observation are sufficient for the time being.



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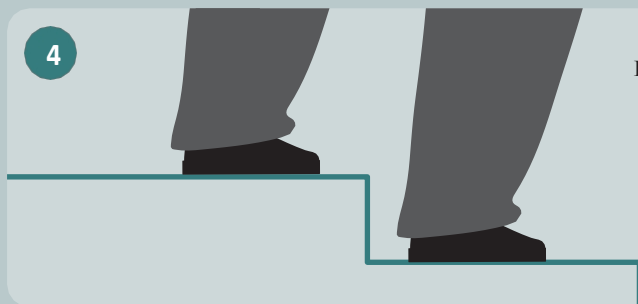


Encourage fluid intake: Have your care drink around 2.5 litres throughout the day – provided there are no contraindications. The nurse must discuss this with the doctor.

- 3 Offer relief positioning:** Help your care recipient to find a position that is comfortable for them.



4



Encourage movement: If possible, encourage your care client to move around – climbing stairs can help pass a stone.

- 5 Use heat in a targeted manner:** Only offer heat applications (e.g. hot water bottle) after consulting a doctor, as heat is contraindicated in inflammatory processes.

