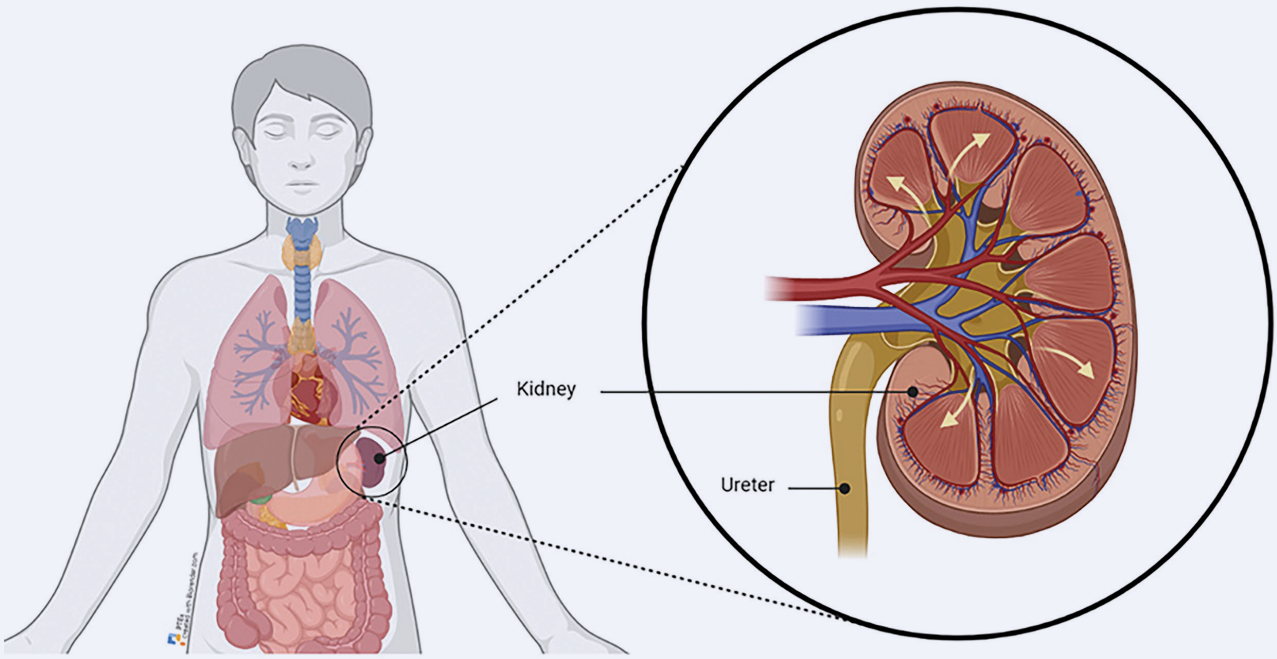
# PATHOLOGY TESTS EXPLAINED

Information about pathology tests to help everyone take control of their health and make the right decisions about their care.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT **YOUR CREATININE TESTS**

Creatinine is a waste product that is found in your blood. It is produced by your muscles as part of normal activity. Almost all of it is filtered from your blood by your kidneys and passed out of the body in your urine.

If your kidneys are not working properly creatinine levels build up in your blood, so measuring creatinine is a good way to find out how well your kidneys are working. It is usually ordered along with other tests such as sodium, potassium bicarbonate and urea, and sometimes with calcium. It is often part of a routine blood test if you have non-specific health complaints that your doctor suspects could be to do with your kidneys. It also used at regular intervals to monitor treatment for kidney disease.




Kidney function

### How your kidneys work

You have two kidneys and these are located at the bottom of the rib cage either side of the spine. Within them are about a million tiny blood filtering units called nephrons. In each nephron blood is continually filtered through a microscopic cluster of looping blood vessels, called the glomerulus. The glomerulus allows the passage of water and small molecules but retains blood cells and larger molecules.

Attached to each glomerulus is a tiny tube (tubule) that collects the fluid and molecules that pass through the glomerulus and then reabsorbs what still can be used by the body. The remaining waste forms urine. In a healthy person just over one litre of blood is filtered through your kidneys per minute.

Kidneys can be damaged by a range of health problems with the most common causes being diabetes and high blood pressure. When your kidneys are damaged, waste products and fluid are less easily filtered and removed and build up in your body.