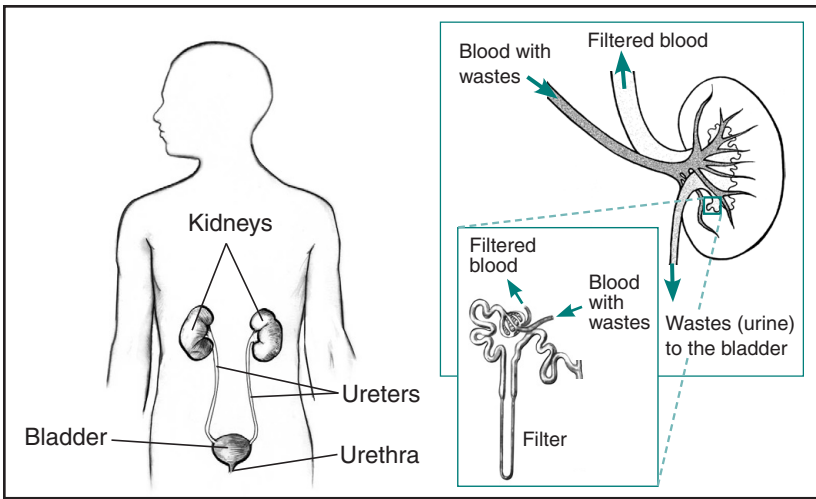


## What are my kidneys and what do they do?

You have two kidneys. The kidneys are shaped like beans. Each kidney is about the size of a fist. They are located just below your ribcage, one on each side of your spine. Your kidneys filter your blood. Each kidney is made of 1 million little filters. During every minute of every day, these filters take out waste materials that can hurt you. They also take out extra fluid from your blood. The wastes and extra fluid make urine. The urine flows from your kidneys to your bladder through tubes called **ureters**\*. The bladder stores urine until you urinate. Then, urine leaves the body through a tube called the **urethra**.

\*See the Pronunciation Guide for tips on how to say the words in **bold** type.



Each kidney is made of 1 million little filters.

## What is kidney failure?

Kidney failure means your kidneys no longer filter your blood well enough to keep you healthy. Failing kidneys do a poor job of removing wastes and extra fluid from your blood. Wastes and extra fluid begin to build up. The buildup of wastes can make you sick. You may have the following symptoms:

- ankle, face, or belly swelling
- stomach sickness
- throwing up
- loss of appetite