

# The Kidneys

Body & health

What they filter, how much, and what the numbers on a blood test mean.

Two fist-sized organs that filter waste from blood, balance water, salts and acidity, and regulate blood pressure and red blood cell production.

**FILTERED/DAY**

**~180 L**

**URINE/DAY**

**1-2 L**

**NEPHRONS**

**~1 million each**

- About 180 litres filtered per day; 99% reabsorbed.
- Roughly 1-2 litres leaves as urine.
- Each kidney holds about a million nephrons, the filtering units.
- They regulate sodium, potassium, calcium and pH.
- They release erythropoietin, which drives red cell production.
- One healthy kidney is enough to live normally.

## LOOK FOR IT

eGFR estimates filtration rate; creatinine is a waste product that rises when filtration falls.

Blood pressure control is a kidney function. That is why kidney disease and hypertension so often appear together.