Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) and Nervous System Changes

Some people with CKD have changes in nerve functioning, usually in the legs and feet or arms and hands. These symptoms are less common than other symptoms of chronic kidney disease and are more likely to occur during the later stages when a large amount of kidney function has been lost. These symptoms may be more extreme in the presence of other diseases such as diabetes.

Some Causes of These Changes:
- buildup of waste products in the blood (uremia)
- electrolyte imbalance
- acidosis (in advanced kidney disease).

Some Common Symptoms:
- dry mouth
- changes in body temperature (many people feel cold)
- feeling lightheaded when moving from sitting to standing
- restless legs (need to constantly move legs when resting)
- burning feet
- numbness or tingling
- leg weakness
- muscle cramps
- impotence.

While these symptoms are common in people with CKD, everyone responds differently. Listen to your body and be aware of any changes.

Things You Should Do:
- Moisten mouth with ice chips, hard candy, or chewing gum.
- Wear extra clothing if you feel cold.
- Get up slowly from a lying or sitting position.
- Take your medications.
- If you are on dialysis, follow your treatment plan as ordered by your kidney specialist and follow your diet to maintain blood results within acceptable ranges.
- If you have numbness in your hands or feet, be very careful when using hot water. Test water temperature first with a thermometer.
- If using heating pad, only use low temperature setting.
- Hot water bottles should always be wrapped in at least 1 towel and not placed directly on skin.
- Avoid walking barefoot to prevent any injured areas.