Microalbumin Screening for Diabetic Nephropathy

One complication of diabetic nephropathy is damage to the kidneys. Microalbumin screening is a tool used to diagnose and detect diabetic nephropathy in its early stages. The screening tests the health of your kidneys by measuring very small levels of albumin, a protein that is important for tissue growth and healing, in your urine. Albumin is normally found in the blood and is filtered by the kidneys. However, when the kidneys are not working properly albumin can leak into the urine, a complication called microalbuminuria.

A microalbumin screening can be performed on a sample of urine collected through any of the three methods below:

- Random spot collection measurement of the albumin-to-creatinine ratio
- 24-hour collection with creatinine
- Timed (example – 4 hour, overnight) collection

Things to consider:

- The American Diabetes Association recommends, in Type 1 diabetes, a yearly microalbumin urine test beginning 5 years after diagnosis.
- The American Diabetes Association recommends a microalbumin urine test to be performed at the time of diagnosis, then annually, and during pregnancy for Type 2 diabetes.
- According to the American Diabetes Association, 20 to 40 percent of individuals with diabetes develop kidney disease.
- Preventive measures in managing microalbuminuria include improving blood sugar control, reducing blood pressure, and modifying the diet.

Table of Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Will I live longer if I have this screening?

There is no scientific evidence to support that having a microalbumin screening will lengthen your life. However, the screening may lead to earlier treatment to prevent damage to the kidneys.

Does the microalbumin screening for diabetic nephropathy make my symptoms better?

A microalbumin screening will not make your symptoms better, but test results may encourage treatment to prevent damage to the kidneys.
Safety

How safe is microalbumin screening for me?

Collecting a urine sample for microalbumin screening is not a dangerous procedure.

Comparison

The alternative to microalbumin screening is not practicing prevention or early detection of diabetic nephropathy.

Cost

Laboratory cost may vary depending on where the test is performed.

The cost may or may not be covered by your health benefits plan.

Sources


Next Review Date 9/27/2013