URINARY CRYSTALS

By **Prof. Amr Sarhan** *Mansoura University*

WHY URINARY CRYSTALS ?

- Urinary crystals are very common, they are almost always present in every routine urine analysis
- They are simply diagnosed by microscopic examination during routine urine analysis
- □ Their pathophysiology and clinical significant is not clear
- □ Children with urinary crystals are rarely taken optimal care



I- Pathophysiology

II- Solutes forming crystals Oxalic acid Uric acid

III- Clinical significance of urinary crystals Diagnosis Treatment



Crystalluria is defined as "presence of crystals in urine"

□ It results from supersaturation of some urinary solutes



I- Pathophysiology

U Urine

Urinary solutes (non volatile waste products)

Crystals

□ Solubility and supersaturation

What is the main function of the kidney ?

The main function of the kidney is urine formation

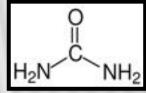
FUNCTION OF THE KIDNEYS

By urine formation the kidneys

- □ Regulate water, electrolytes and acid base balance.
- Excrete non-volatile waste products (urinary solutes), mainly nitrogenous compound in addition to other compounds.

Other functions include:

Erythropoietin secretion.
 Regulation of blood pressure through renin.
 Activation of Vit. D



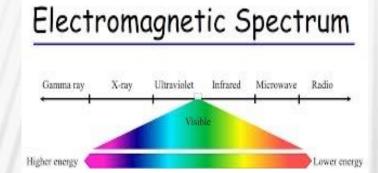


□ From the chemical point of view, urine is solution

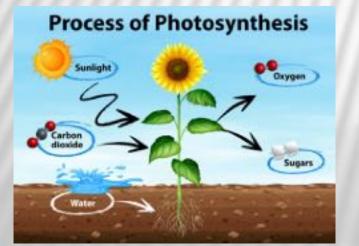
□ It is formed of :

Solvent (water) + **solutes** (non volatile waste products)

SUN, PLANTS AND ENERGY







6 H2O + 6 CO2 C6 H12 O6 + 6 O2

METABOLISM IN HUMAN

Digestion of thousands of complex foodstuf leads to few small soluble molecules

- Carbohydrates Monosaccharides
 Fat Fatty acids and glycerol
 Droteing
- Proteins Amino acids

□ These molecules are formed from hydrocarbons (C, H and O) in addition to N

These molecules have potential energy

METABOLISM IN HUMAN

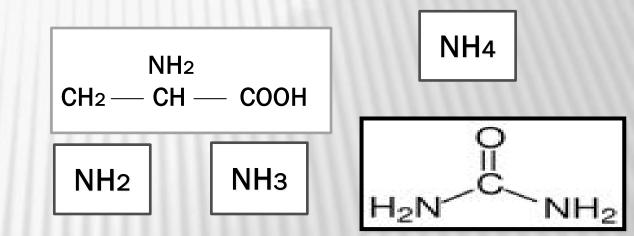
- □ Oxidation of these small molecules leads to
 - □ Release potential energy stored in ATP It is used
 - Heat production
 - Waste products
 - * volatile waste products
 - CO2 is excreted by lung (volatile waste products)
 H2O..... endogenous water
 - * Non-volatile waste

NON-VOLATIL WASTE PRODUCT

□ Non-volatile waste products (urinary solutes).

I- Organic compound

1- Nitrogenous compounds
□ Urea.
□ NH4 salts

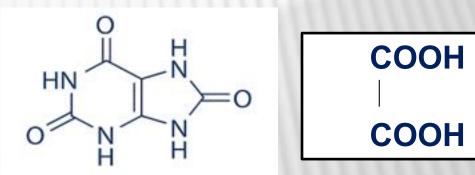


2- Other organic compounds

□ Organic acids, amino acids, vitamins, hormone,

NON-VOLATILE WASTE PRODUCTS

3- End product of organic compounds Oxalic acid Uric acid Creatinine



II-Non organic compound

Electrolytes, minerals, inorganic acids, trace elements,

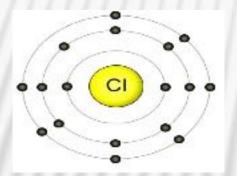
- **Calcium**
- Phosphate
- □ Carbonic acid

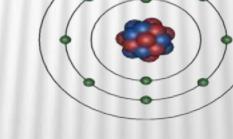


Chemical bonds

lonic Covalent Hydrogen

Ionic bond - Ion Exchange





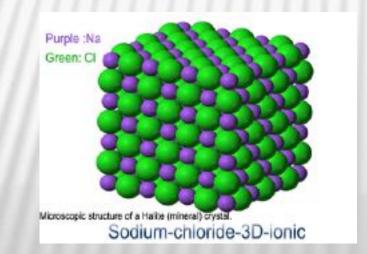
Chloride atom Anion -ve Sodium atom cation +ve



□ A crystal is a solid material that is formed from ions

🗆 It is formed by cohesion (تماسك) of these ions due to their electrostatic activity

□ It is arranged in a highly geometric, well organized microscopic structure



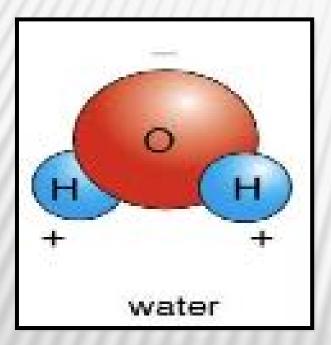
WATER AS SOLVENT

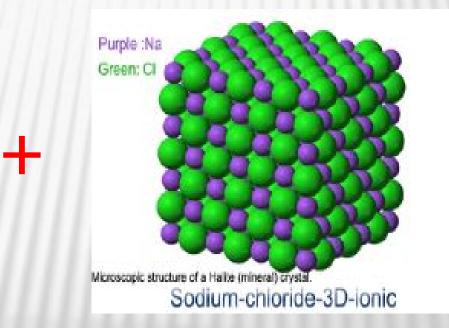
- Water molecule is formed by covalent bond (رابطه تساهمیه) between 2 hydrogen atoms and 1 oxygen atom.
- □ Water molecules stick to each other (*cohesion* تتماسك) to form chemical compound
- □ Water molecules have partial +ve charge at [H+] and partial –ve charge at [O- atom]
- □ Water is a polar molecule





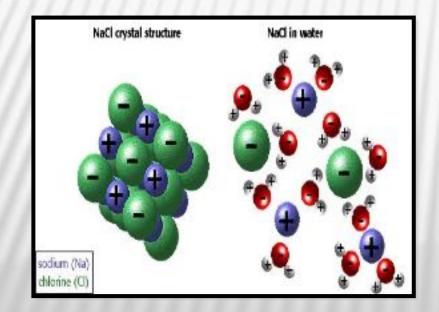
WATER AS SOLVENT

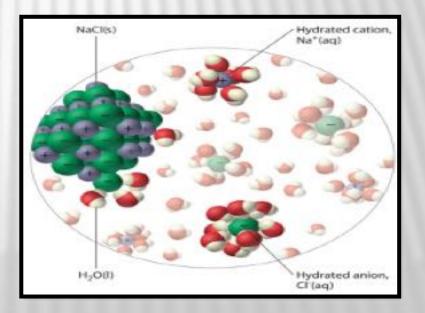




WATER AS SOLVENT

- □ Water molecules due their polarity attract ions from crystals to form solution
- □ Solubility depends on electrostatic activity between molecules of crystals
- □ Water is universal solvent "solvent of life





SOLUBILITY AND SUPERSATURATION

Solubility is a chemical property referring to the ability for a given solvent (water) to dissolve a solutes (crystals)

It is measured the maximum amount of solute (gm) that dissolve in a solvent (1 liter) at standard condition.

□ The resulting solution is called saturated solution.

Addition of more solute can not be dissolved and remains in solid form supersaturation

SOLUBILITY AND SUPERSATURATION

□ Solubility of solutes in water.

- In neutral pH, at 25^oC and sea-water atmospheric pressure , one litter of water can dissolve:
 - □ Glucose 909 gm/L
 - □ Na CL 350 gm/L
 - □ Uric acid 60 mg / L 6 mg / dl
 - \square Calcium oxalate 6.1 mg/L $\$ less than 1mg/dl
- It depends on electrostatic activity of crystal molecules

Crystallization of solutes in water:

- It occurs if solute concentration exceeds supersaturation level :
 - □ Water ↓.
 - □ Solute ↑.

RISK FACTORS

The most important independent risk factor of urinary crystals formation is **Supersaturation**

- Other risk factors
 - Urinary pH
 - Decrease natural inhibitors of crystals formation (citrate, Mg.....)

RISK FACTORS FOR STONE FORMATION

□ In addition to crystals formation, which is the initial step for nephrolithiasis, risk

factors for stone formation include

Urinary tract obstruction

Renal tubular abnormality or injury

Medications



- I- Pathophysiology
- **II- Solutes forming crystals**
- **III-** Clinical significance of urinary crystals

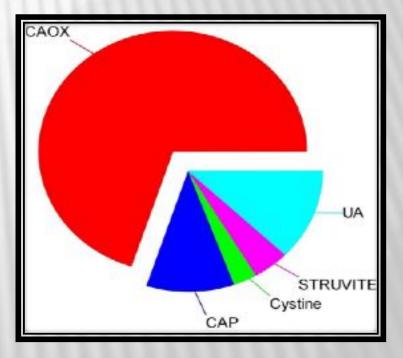
SOLUTES FORMING CRYSTALS

□ Most of urinary crystals are formed from normal constitutes of urine.

□ Solutes responsible for normal crystals formation are:

- Calcium
- Oxalic acid
- Uric acid
- Phosphorous
- Pathological crystals

Cysteine, cholesterol, bilirubin, tyrosine, leucine, sulfonamide



HYPERCALCIURIA

Causes

With hypercalcemia:

- □ Hyperparathyroidism.
- Hypervitaminosis D and A.
- Immobilization in malignancies.
- □ Hypo and hyperthyroidism.
- Malignancy

Without hypercalcemia:

Idiopathic (primary) most common : Gain function mutation of CaSR Hypocalcemic hypercalciuric Secondary Renal tubular disorders: Dent disease. Lowe syndrome. Bartter syndrome d-RTA.



□ Oxalic acid is dicarboxylic acid

□ It is widely distributed in plants (1-100 gm /kg dry weight)

□ In plants, oxalic acid has many functions

- Antifungal, antibacterial and antiviral effect
- Calcium and iron hemostasis
- pH regulation
- □ Source of CO2 in photosynthesis

СООН | СООН

Exogenous sources:

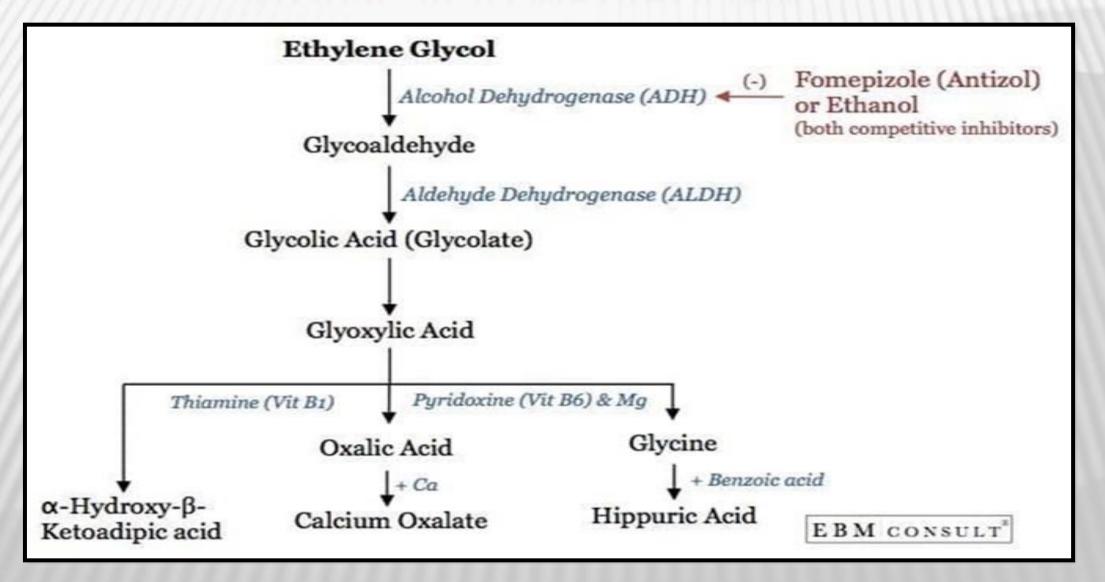
- Plant diets ...green vegetables, spinach, tea, chocolate, nuts,
- Average daily oral intake is 100 300 mg / day
- □ Bioavailability 3-5%
- Net absorption average 8-12 mg / day
- □ Exogenous sources reprsent about 30 50 % of total daily intake

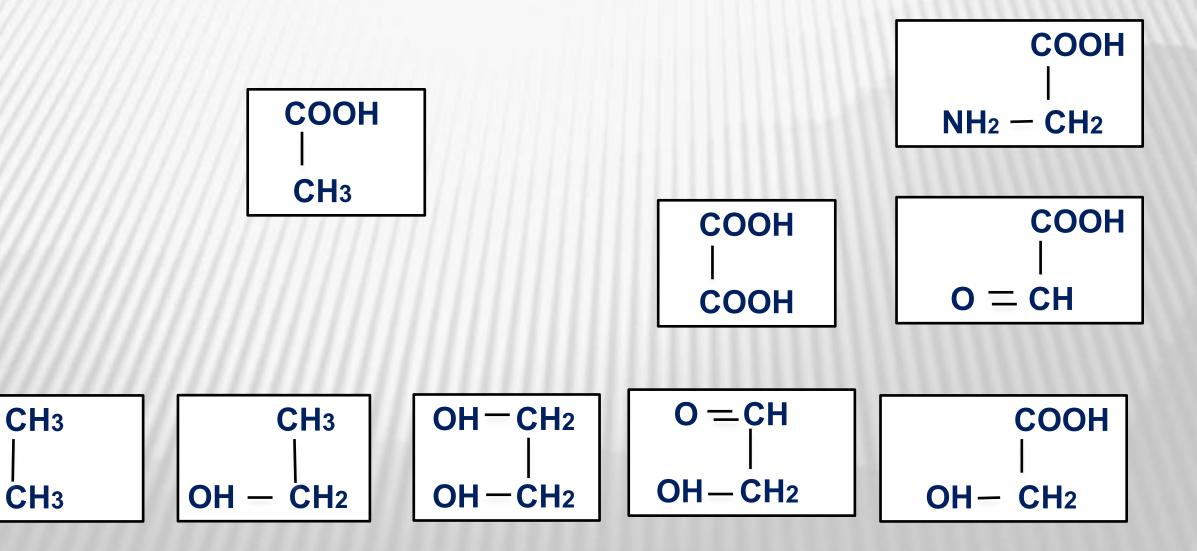
Endogenous sources:.

They represent about 50-70% of total daily intake

Sources

- 1- It is an end product in glycine metabolism
- 2- Non-enzymatic oxidation of ascorbic acid (vit. C)
- 3- Less than 1% from inversion the action of AGT enzyme





- Normal plasma level
 - □ 1 2.4 mg /L
- Metabolism

In humans oxalic acid is an end product (not more oxidized)
 Colonic anaerobic bacteria (oxalobacter formigenes) oxidized oxalic acid to CO₂ and water by oxalic acid oxidase enzyme

Function

It has a role in uracil synthesis (nitrogenous base of RNA)

Elimination:

HYPEROXALURIA

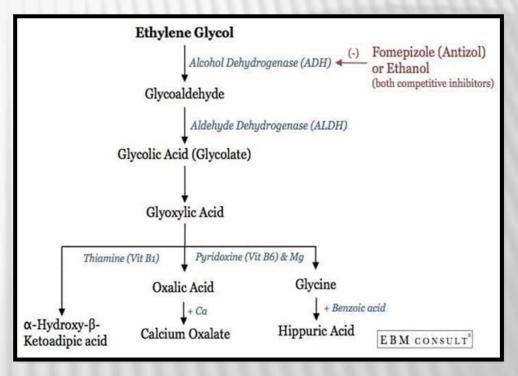
Causes:

• Primary:

Type I .. Alanine glyoxylate aminotransferase
 Type II .. Glyoxylate reductase

Secondary:

- Diet rich in oxalate.
- Low Ca diet
- Enteric hyperoxaluria
 - Malabsorption (IBD, cystic fibrosis...etc.)
 - Oxalobacter foremigenes deficiency





- Uric acid is a heterocyclic nitrogenous organic compound
- □ It is the end product of *purines* metabolism.

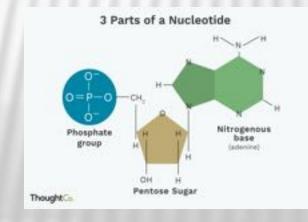


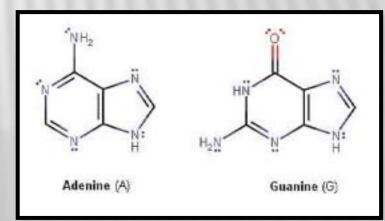
C5 H4 N4 O3

Molecular weight 168 gm/mole



- Purine is heterocyclic nitrogenous organic compound.
- Purines (adenine & guanine) together with pyrimidines (cytosine & thymine), in addition to ribose and phosphates provide the source for DNA and RNA structure
- Purines are essential for other important biochemical structuresATP,
 - Co-enzyme NAD and NADH, cyclic AMP, cyclic GMP

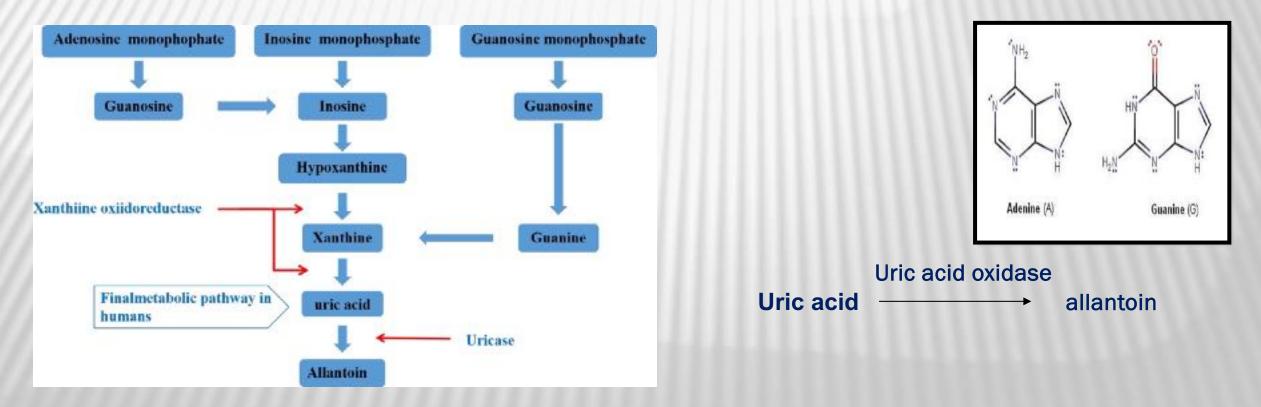




PURINE METABOLISM

Pyrimidine is completely oxidized to CO₂ and water

Uric acid is the end product of purines metabolism in human



URIC ACID METABOLISM

Uric acid oxidase enzyme is founded in nearly all organism from bacteria to mammals

□ It is inactive in human due to nonsense evolutional mutations of it`s gene

 Uric acid is a potent antioxidant, protect endothelium from oxidative damage prolongation of life and protect against cancer

URIC ACID METABOLISM

Sources

Endogenous400 mg /dayExogenous300 mg / day diet reach in purines

- Normal serum level 3 7 mg/ dl Optimum < 6 mg / dl</p>
- Normal 24 h urinary uric acid is < 700 mg</p>

HYPERURICOSURIA

Causes:

- Primary type:
 - □ It is a rare inherited deficiency of purine salvage enzymes.
- Food rich in purine.
- Tumor lysis syndrome.
- Drugs (analgesics, diuretics ...etc.)
- Metabolic syndrome.



I- Pathophysiology

II- Solutes forming crystals

III- Clinical significance of urinary crystals Diagnosis Treatment

DIAGNOSIS OF URINARY CRYSTALS

Routine urine analysis is the most commonly performed laboratory test in clinical practice

Urinary crystals are diagnosed by routine urine analysis

Urine Analysis

Physical Examination			
Volume	Sample	_	
Colour	Yellow	_	
Aspect	Clear	_	
Reaction	Acidic	_	
So Gr		_	

Physical Examination			
Albumin	Nil		
Sugar	Nil		
Keton	Ni		
Nitrite	NR		
Bilinubin	NI		
Bile Saks	NI		
Urobilinogen	Normal		
and the second			

Microscopic Examination				
R.B.Cs	0-1/	H.P.F		
Pus Cells	1-3/	H.P.F		
Epithelial Cells	ING.	H.P.F		
Casts	Nit			
Crystals	Uric acid (Few)			
Amorphous Material	Nil			
Bilharzial Ova	Nil			



Urine sample collection

First morning voided urine

Clean-catch, mid stream voided urine

□ Urine sample must be stored at 37C not refrigerated

Examination should be done within two hours following voiding

DIAGNOSIS

Procedure

- □ 10 ml urine (fresh, morning sample)
- Centrifuged for 5 minutes at 1500 rpm
- Supernatant is discarded (poured of)
- Resuspend in 0.5 ml urine
- □ Drop of this solution is placed on glace slide and covered with cover slip
- The slide is examined immediately under the microscope using first the low power and then the high power field



Examination

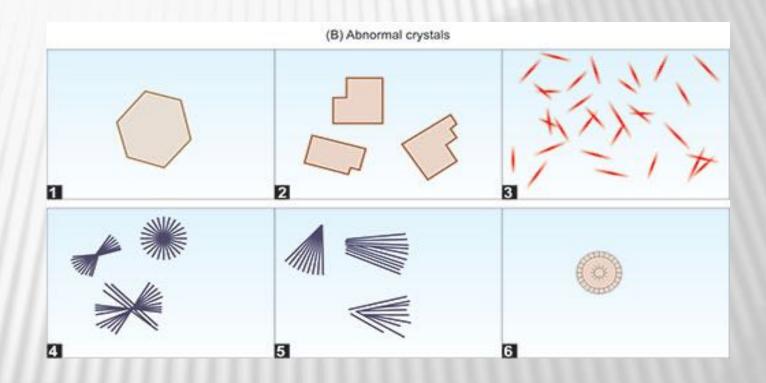
- **U**rinary crystals should be examined according to the following criteria:
 - □ Chemical nature
 - □ Urine pH
 - Morphology
 - Crystal abundance
 - □ Crystal size
 - Crystal aggregation
 - □ Solubility
 - □Persistent crystaluria

Chemical structure

- Crystals are *refractile* structure with a definite geometric shape due to orderly arranged their atoms and molecules
- □ Crystals can be identified microscopically by their specific *morphology*
- □ First step for diagnosis of urinary crystals is to:
 - Identify and recognize abnormal urinary crystals
 - Confirm their diagnosis by additional chemical test (solubility test)

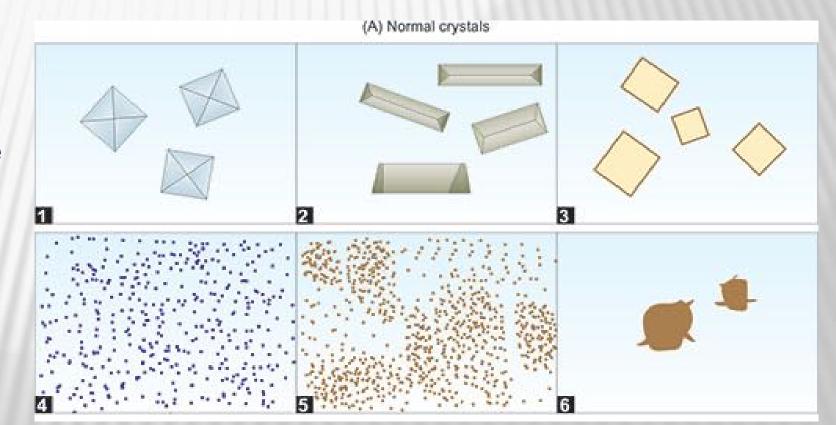
Abnormal urinary crystals

- 1- Cysteine
- 2- Cholesterol
- 3- Bilirubin
- 4-Tyrosine
- 5- Sulfonamide
- 6- Leucine



□ Normal urinary crystals

- 1- Calcium oxalate
- 2- Triple phosphate
- 3- Uric acid
- 4- Amorphous phosphate
- 5- Amorphous urates
- 6- Ammonium urate



Crystal and pH of urine

Normal crystals in acidic urine

- \circ Uric acid
- Calcium oxalate
- Amorphous urates

Normal crystals in alkaline urine

- Calcium carbonate
- Phosphates
- Ammonium urate crystals



□ Most of abnormal crystals occur in acidic urine

Crystal morphology

Calcium oxalate according to number of water molecules

 $_{\circ}$ tri hydrate

o anhydrous

o dihydrate envelop shaped

o monohydrate ... dumbbled, needle, or oval shaped







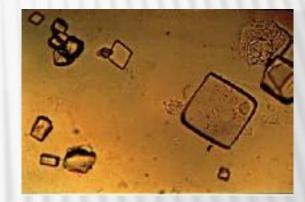
Crystal morphology

□ Uric acid

Plates, rosette, diamond shped

□ Urates

k, Mg, Caamorphus
ammonium...... cactus







□ Abundance

In routine urine analysis, crystals are subjectively quantified as:
 few (+)
 moderate (++)
 many (+++)

Abundance In special situations(stone former)

Counting crystals in urine sediment (> 200 CaO crystals /mm3 highly suggestive of primary hyperoxaluria)

□ Global crystal volume (oxalate and cysteine)

Urine flow cytometry is an automated methods to detect and quantify different urinary components including crystals

Abundance

Chemical analysis of solutes concentration in 24 h urine collection or solute/creatinine ratio give accurate value of different solutes and replaces these techniques

Crystal size

Increase size of calcium oxalate crystal > 35 microns (normal size <20) is indicative of simultaneous hypercalciuria and hyperoxaluria

Crystal aggregation

It is defined as more than 3 crystals tightly joint together is suggestive risk of stone formation



G Solubility

Abnormal crystals should not be diagnosed on microscopic examination alone Solubility test should be performed ex cysteine crystals are soluble in 30% HCI cholesterol crystal are soluble in ether or alcohol

Frequency

Persistent crystalluria of first morning sample is the most reliable marker for detecting the risk of stone recurrence in stone formers

CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Normal crystalluria is not, per se, a marker of a pathological condition, it is a marker of super saturation in both normal and pathological conditions

In stone former, it is the best marker for predicting stone recurrence during their follow-up

It offers the opportunity to adjust dietary and drug management, and thus control stone formation



- Presence of normal urinary crystals in urine analysis is normal, is normal, is normal
- They need no treatment, no treatment, no treatment
- Treatment is just assurance
- When do to treat urinary crystals



- Indication of treatmentStone former
 - Family history of metabolic stone diseases
 - Risk factors of urinary crystals
 - Abundant crystalluria (heavy, increase count, increase global volume)
 - Increase crystal size
 - Crystal aggregation
 - Persistent crystalluria

TREATMENT

- □ Increase water intake
- Decrease exogenous sources of
 - $_{\rm O}$ Oxalate reach food
 - $_{\rm \circ}$ Urate reach food
- Normal calcium intake
- Avoid excessive intake of vit. C, vit D supplement
- Avoid excessive salt and protein intake
- Natural inhibitors of crystal formation (K citrates)

TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- 1. Urinary crystals are very common, they are almost always present in every routine urine analysis
- 2. They are simply diagnosed by microscopic examination depending on crystals morphology
- 3. Urinary crystals are divided into normal and abnormal crystals
- 4. Normal urinary crystals are formed from normal urinary constitutes

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

- 5- Normal crystalluria is not, per se, a marker of a pathological condition, it is a marker of supersaturation in both normal and pathological conditions
- 6. In stone formers, crystalluria is a marker for predicting stone recurrence during their follow-up
- 7. Treatment of normal urinary crystals, after exclusion of risk factors, is assurance
- 8- In human, absence of two enzymes oxalic oxidase and uric acid oxidase is responsible for most of urinary crystals and stones

Thank you

- □ They are a class of G-protein coupled receptors
- **They** are expressed in
 - Parathyroid gland
 - Brain
 - **Renal tubules**
 - Proximal tubules (luminal)
 Loop of Henle (basolateral)
 Connecting duct (basolateral)
 Collecting duct luminal)
 - Others

- □ They sense extracellular calcium level
- □ They regulate ionized serum calcium level
- □ Calcium sensing receptor gene has 2 types of mutations:
 - **Gain function mutation**
 - Loss function mutation

□ Mechanism of action

- ↑ Serum calcium level
 - parathyroid gland _____ PTH
 - kidney _____ calcium excretion in urine

↓ Serum calcium level parathyroid gland → ↑ PTH Kidney → ↓ Calcium excretion in urine

□ Gain function mutation

Calcium (normal or low) $1 \downarrow PTH \longrightarrow \downarrow$ calcium level \longrightarrow hypocalcemia $2 \downarrow$ urinary calcium excretion \longrightarrow hypercalciuria

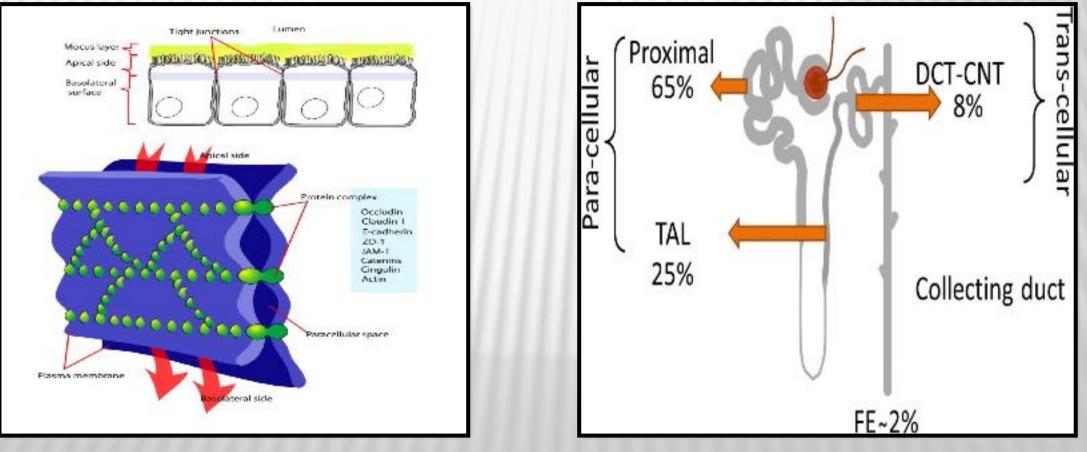
Loss function mutation

Hypercalcemic hypocalciuric

□ Calcimimetic agents

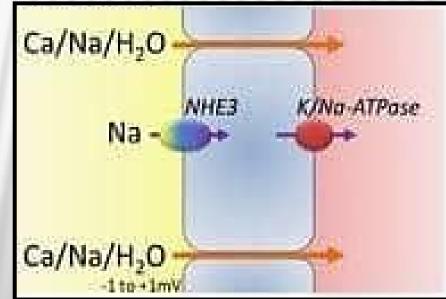
Cinacalcet ... mimpara

Calcium ions have intracellular signaling activity, so most of its reabsorption occurs paracellular.



Proximal tubules:

- □ Ca is reabsorbed by passive hormone-independent paracellular transport through freely permeable epithelium of proximal tubules.
- □ Driving force for Ca reabsorption is provided by Na-H exchanger.
- CaSR (luminal) have no role in calcium reabsorption, but may have a role in activation of vit D and Pi excretion.



Loop of Henle:

- Calcium is reabsorbed by controlled paracellular pathway involving claudin 16, 19, 14.
- The driving force is provided by Na-K-2CI cotransporter, ROMK and Na –K-ATPase
- Paracellular permeability is controlled by CaSR (basolateral) which express either:

(16 & 19) claudin Permeable(14) claudins Block



Mg** Ca** Basolatera

CaSR

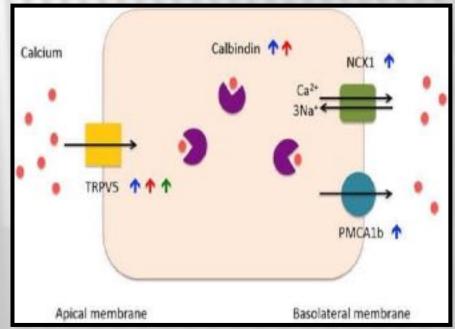
CI --- CIC-Kb

Claudin-14

Claudin-16/19

Na*/K* ATPase

- Distal tubules and connecting ducts
- Calcium enters the cell at apical side through transient receptor potential V5 (TRPV5) channels.
- □ Inside the cell, it binds intracellular calbindin.
- At the basolateral side, it exits by sodium calcium exchanger (NCX1) and calcium ATPase
- □ TRPV5 is activated by vit D and PTH.
- □ Thiazides activate TRPV5, calbindin and NCX1



HYPEROXALURIA

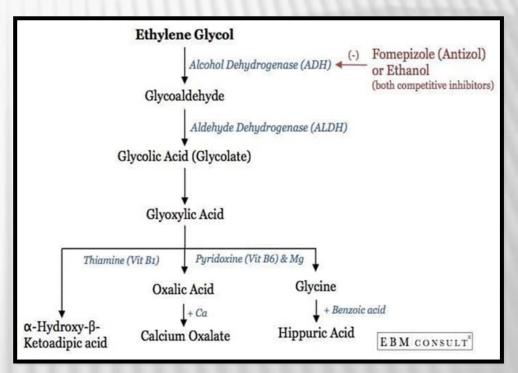
Causes:

Primary:

- Type I .. Alanine glyoxylate aminotransferase
 Type II .. Glyoxylate reductase
- **Secondary:**
 - Diet rich in oxalate.
 - Low Ca.
 - Enteric hyperoxaluria
 - Malabsorption (IBD, cystic fibrosis...etc.)
 - Oxalobacter

Effect:

Nephrocalcinosis and nephrolithiasis

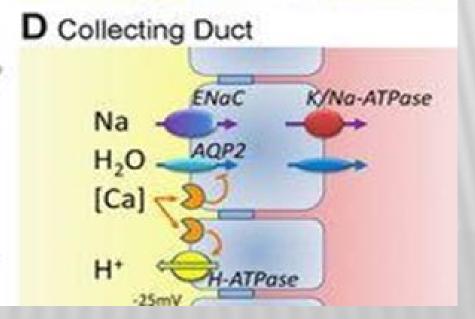


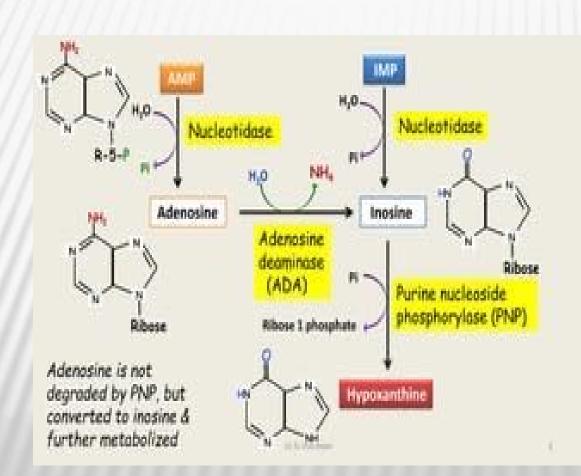
CALCIUM HOMEOSTASIS

Collecting ducts

Collecting ducts are absolutely impermeable to Ca reabsorption, neither transcellular nor paracellular.

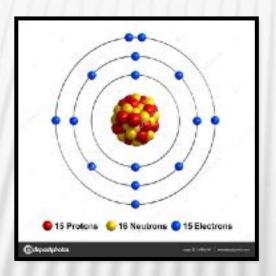
□In case of hypercalciuria, CaSR at the luminal side inhibits water reabsorption and stimulates urine acidification.

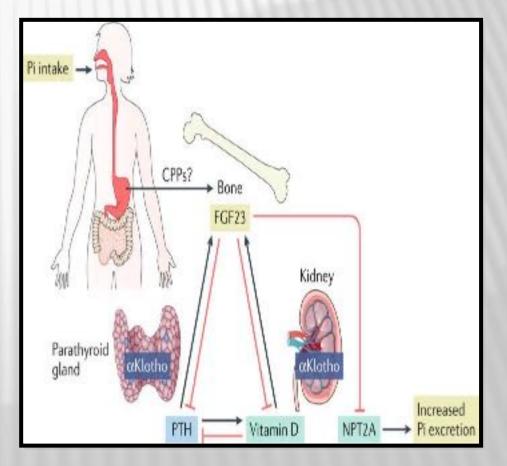




PHOSPHORUS

- It is the most common intracellular anion.
- **Distribution:**
 - **Bone 85%**
 - **Goft tissue 14%:**
 - Nucleic acid
 - □ ATP-AMP
 - Phospholipid
 - **Extracellular fluid 1%**





HYPER PHOSPHATURIA

Excretion:

□It is freely filtered at glomerular level.

Reabsorption mainly occurs at PT by:

□ Na dependent Pi co-transporter

PTH and FGF 23 inhibits reabsorption of Pi.

Hyper phosphaturia not lead to stone formation except in presence of:
 Hypercalciuria

Alkaline urine

Other risk factors



Crystal formation:

USupersaturation.

□рН.

Absence of naturally inhibitors substances (citrate).

Crystal adhesion:

UTubular renal disorders

Injured renal tubules by infections and drugs.

Rapidly proliferating tubular epithelium (newborn).



Crystal endocytosis:

□It leads to formation of interstitial suburothelial crystals that become apatite (Ca phosphate) plaques.

Crystal aggregation:

□stone

□ Stone migration:

Papillary tip of the kidney or moves down.

CONCLUSIONS

Nephrolithiasis is common and serious medical problem dating since ancient times, with unclear pathophysiology.

□ Water is the solvent of life.

□ Kidney stones are formed from normal urinary constitutes.

Supersaturation of stone forming solutes is the most important independent risk factor in stone formation.



Other risk factors include urinary pH, UTI, stasis, decrease natural inhibitors, medications and renal tubular abnormalities.

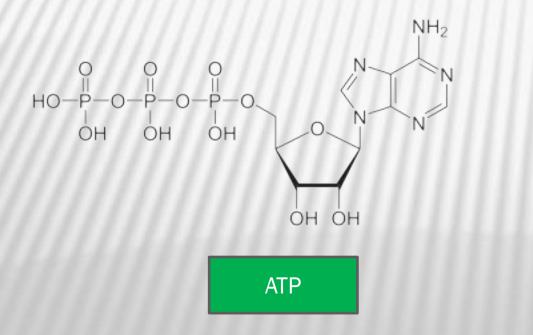
Updates in renal handling of Ca may declare some of the pathophysiologic mechanism of nephrolithiasis in the future.

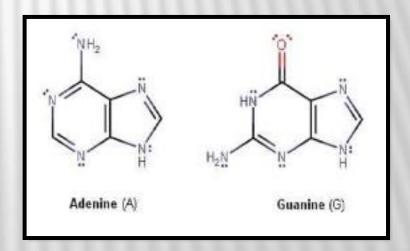
THANK YOU

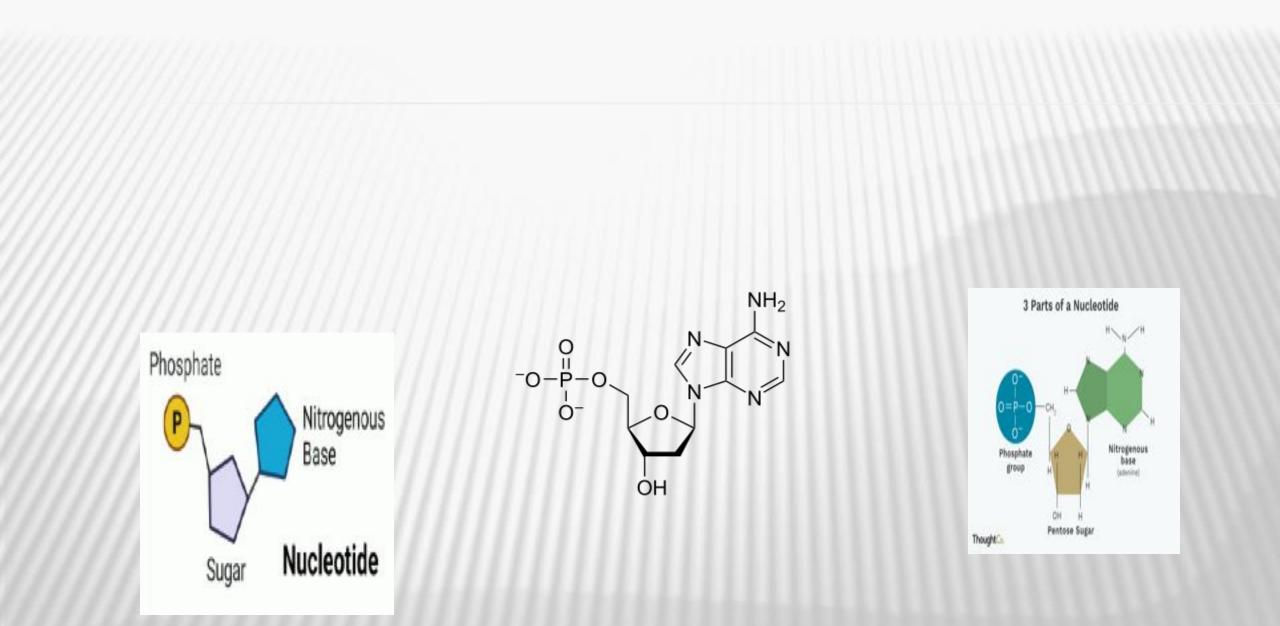


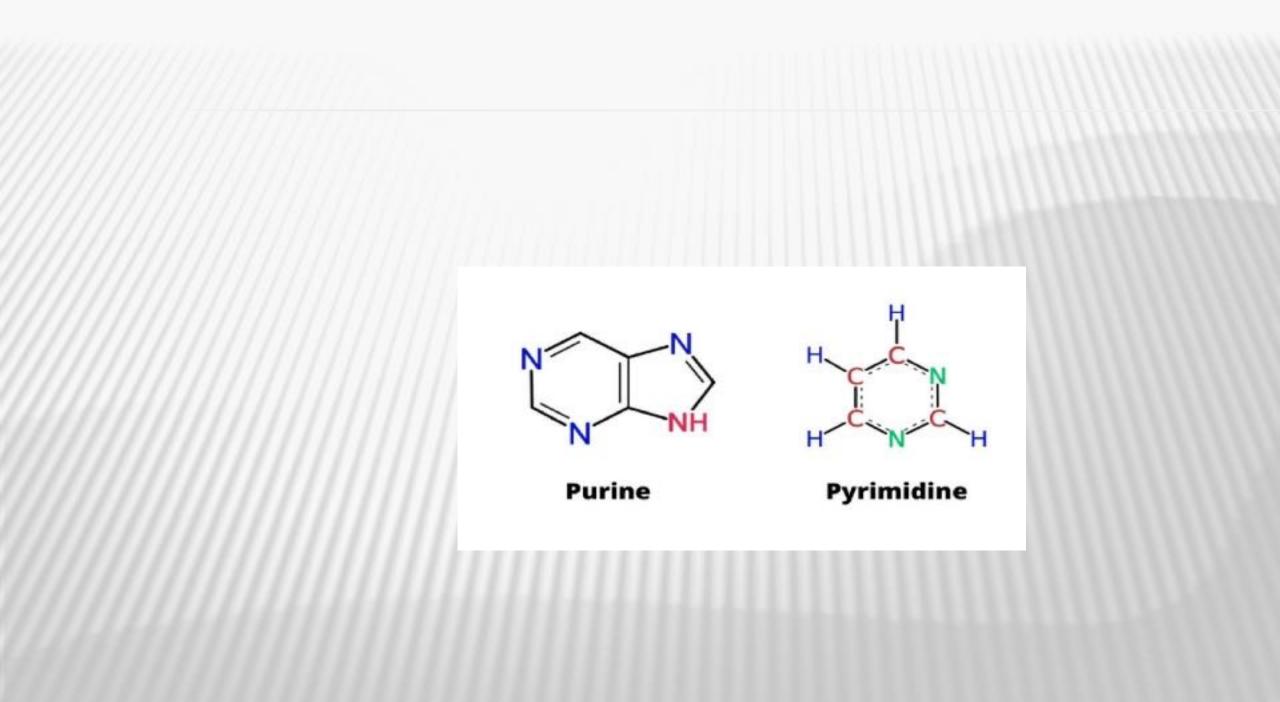
Purine (adenine) provides primary source of cellular energy through ATP

Purine is essential for other important biochemical structuresATP, Co-enzyme NAD and NADH, cyclic AMP, cyclic GMP





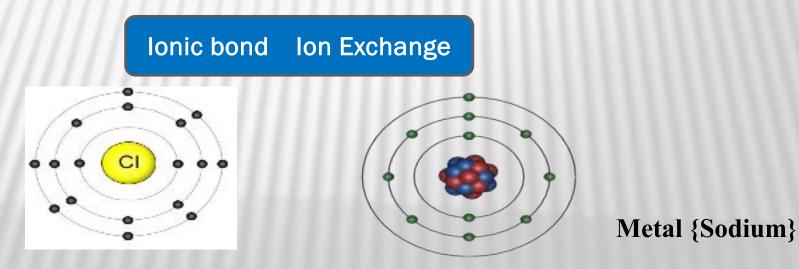




CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS

Elements are devided to

- 1- Metal is element that easily loss electron to be stable (Na, K, Ca, Mg,), after electeron loss it become cataion (ion bears +ve charge)
- 2- Non- metal is element that easily gain electron to be stable (O2, CI, C,....), after electron gain it become anion (ion bears –ve charge)



Non-metal {Chloride}

Chemical reaction is the process that occurs when two or more molecules interact to form new product

Chemical reaction requires energy

The new product store this energy (potential energy)

For human being, food is the source of this potential energy



- **Definition**
- Waste products are useless materials and usually toxic, that are produced
- from biological processes in the body and should be eleminated
- **Types**

Volatile waste products Non – volatile waste products

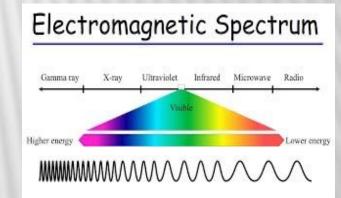
ENERGY AND CO2 CYCLE

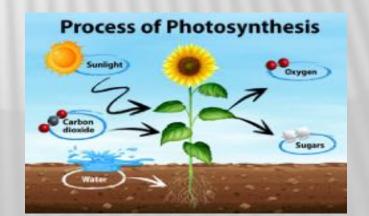
Photosynthesis

- More thane 99% of energy used on earth is provided by plants
- Chlorophyll of green plant uses part of electromagnetic radiation
 of sun for reduction of water O2 + energy
- This energy is used for formation of glucose from water and CO2

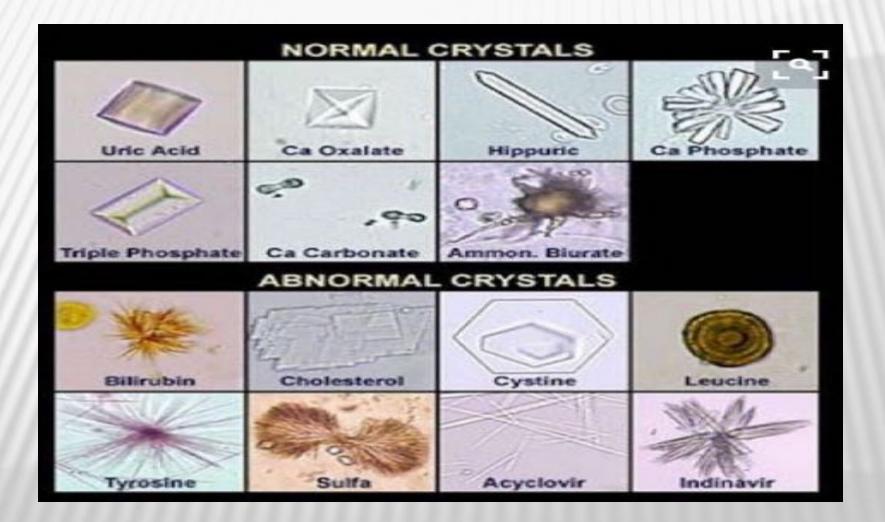
6 H2O + 6 CO2 C6 H12 O6 + 6 O2

- End result, plant cells store solar energy in glucose
- Potential energy of glucose is consumed in biological reaction in plant cell



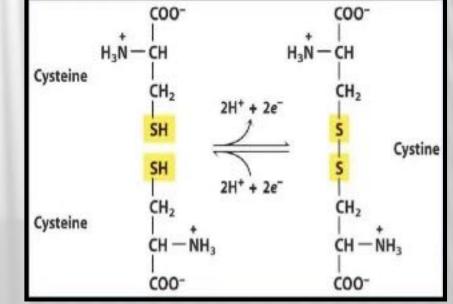


URINARY CRYSTALS





- Cystine is essential dibasic amino-acid, it is formed by oxidation of 2 molecules of cysteine.
- □It is insoluble in water.
- □About 99% of filtered cystine is reabsorbed in the proximal renal tubules by a transporter formed by 2 subunits:
 - rBAT (Neutral Basic Amino acid Transport).
 - AGT 1 (alpha glucoside transporter 1)
- **Gene mutation of either subtypes leads to**
 - cystinuria which in acid urine lead to cystine stone





Chemistry

Oxalic acid is organic dicarboxilic acid

Chemical formula C2 H2 O4

Molecular weight ... 90 daltons

СООН | СООН

Highly soluable in water at temp. 20 C 1/10 (polar compound).. Ca oxalate???



□ About 99% of total body Ca resides in bone. Only 1% is found in soft tissues and extracellular spaces. Ionized calcium represents only 1%

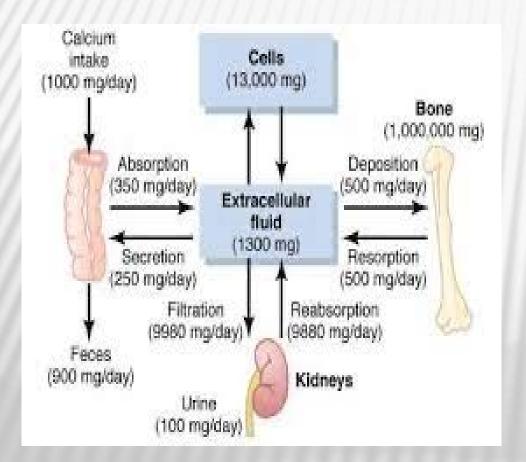
□ Calcium plays a crucial role in:

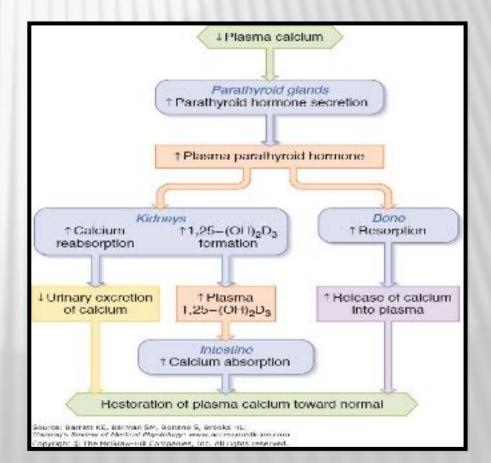
- Intracellular signaling.
- Neuromuscular junction.
- Blood coagulation.
- □ Bone formation.

CALCIUM HOMEOSTASIS

Blessed were the days, when calcium homeostasis was regulated by

calciotropic hormones (PTH and active vit D).





CALCIUM HOMEOSTASIS

The role of the kidney in calcium homeostasis has been reshaped from the classic view to another view in which the kidney actively takes a part in regulation of calcium homeostasis.

Update of calcium renal handling includes:

- □ Renal Ca sensing receptor..... CaSR.
- **Transient receptors potential vanilloid type 5 channels TRPV 5.**
- **Calbindin.**

URIC ACID METABOLISM

- Uric acid is a potent antioxidant, 50% of plasma antioxidant is due to uric acid
- It's solubility is 60 mg / liter, it depends on pH, in alkaline urine it combines with sodium to form
 - sodium hydrogen urate is more solubil by ten times than oxalic acid
 - disodium urates is more solubile by ten times than sodium hdrogen urate