

Donna E. Hansel
Christopher J. Kane
Gladell P. Paner
Sam S. Chang *Editors*

The Kidney

A Comprehensive Guide
to Pathologic Diagnosis and
Management

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Donna E. Hansel, M.D., Ph.D.
Department of Pathology
University of California at San Diego
San Diego, CA, USA

Christopher J. Kane, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Department of Urology
University of California at San Diego
San Diego, CA, USA

Gladell P. Paner, M.D.
Department of Pathology and Surgery
Section of Urology
University of Chicago
Chicago, IL, USA

Sam S. Chang, M.D., F.A.C.S., M.B.A.
Department of Urologic Surgery
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Nashville, TN, USA

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Contributors

Vanesa Bijol, M.D. Department of Pathology, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA, USA

Anna M. Burgner, M.D. Division of Nephrology, Department of Medicine, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, USA

Anthony Chang, M.D. Department of Pathology, University of Chicago Medical Center, Chicago, IL, USA

Sam S. Chang, M.D., M.B.A. Department of Urologic Surgery, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, USA

George Chiang, M.D. Division of Pediatric Urology, Rady Children's Hospital, University of California at San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA

Peter E. Clark, M.D. Department of Urologic Surgery, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, USA

Itthar H. Derweesh, M.D. Department of Urology, University of California San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA

John M. DiBianco Department of Surgery, Section of Urology, Medical College of Georgia – Georgia Regents University, Augusta, GA, USA

Scott E. Eggener, M.D. Department of Surgery, Section of Urology, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Christopher P. Filson, M.D., M.S. Department of Urology, Institute of Urologic Oncology, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Lan L. Gellert, M.D., Ph.D. Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, USA

Giovanna A. Giannico, M.D. Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, USA

Edward R. Gould, M.D. Division of Nephrology, Department of Medicine, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, USA

Charles C. Guo, M.D. Department of Pathology, MD Anderson Cancer Center, University of Texas, Houston, TX, USA

Omar Hameed, M.D. Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, USA

Department of Urologic Surgery, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, USA

Donna E. Hansel, M.D., Ph.D. Department of Pathology, University of California at San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA

Michelle S. Hirsch, M.D., Ph.D. Department of Pathology, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA

Jiaoti Huang, M.D., Ph.D. Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Shreyas S. Joshi, M.D. Department of Urologic Surgery, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, USA

Christopher J. Kane, M.D., F.A.C.S. Department of Urology, University of California San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA

Zachary Klaassen, M.D. Department of Surgery, Section of Urology, Medical College of Georgia – Georgia Regents University, Augusta, GA, USA

Jamie Koo, M.D. Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Mariah Zampieri Leivo, M.D. Department of Pathology, University of California at San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA

Denise M. Malicki, M.D., Ph.D. Department of Pathology, Rady Children's Hospital San Diego, University of California at San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA

Jennifer M. McBride, Ph.D. Cleveland Clinic, Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, USA

Leili Mirsadraei, M.D. Department of Pathology, University of California at San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA

Gladell P. Paner, M.D. Department of Pathology and Surgery, Section of Urology, University of Chicago Medical Center, Chicago, IL, USA

Allan J. Pantuck, M.D. Department of Urology, Institute of Urologic Oncology, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Christian P. Pavlovich, M.D. Department of Urology, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Baltimore, MD, USA

Shane M. Pearce, M.D. Department of Surgery, Section of Urology, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Omer A. Raheem, M.D. Department of Urology, University of California San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA

Priya Rao, M.D. Department of Pathology, MD Anderson Cancer Center, The University of Texas, Houston, TX, USA

Chad R. Ritch, M.D., M.B.A. Department of Urology, University of Miami, Miami, FL, USA

Ahmed Shabaik, M.D. Department of Pathology, University of California, San Diego Medical Center, San Diego, CA, USA

Armine K. Smith, M.D. Department of Urology, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Sibley Memorial Hospital, Washington, DC, USA

Martha K. Terris, M.D. Department of Surgery, Section of Urology, Medical College of Georgia – Georgia Regents University, Augusta, GA, USA

Stephen Thomas, M.D. Department of Radiology, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Michael Yap, M.D. Division of Pediatric Urology, Rady Children’s Hospital, University of California at San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA

Jennifer M. McBride

Development of the Kidney

During embryonic development, the urinary system emerges from the dorsal body wall as a longitudinal elevation of intermediate mesoderm known as the urogenital ridge (Fig. 1.1a, b). Located along each side of the aorta, the urogenital ridge gives rise to both the urinary system as the nephrogenic cord and the genital system as the gonadal ridge. The following is a description of kidney development from rudimentary non-functional structures of the nephrogenic cord to definitive functional organs.

Early in the fourth week, the primitive kidneys or pronephroi appear as elevations along the cervical region of the developing embryo [1]. These transitory structures consist of epithelial buds which extend ventromedially and pronephric ducts which extend caudally to eventually open into the cloaca of the hindgut (Fig. 1.2a). By the end of the fourth week, the pronephroi have degenerated with the pronephric ducts persisting to become incorporated into the second set of kidneys as the mesonephric (Wolffian) duct (Fig. 1.2b).

During the fourth week, the mesonephroi emerge caudal to the pronephroi and function as interim structures until full development of the permanent kidneys around week 9. Along the length of the mesonephric (Wolffian) ducts (formerly pronephric ducts), mesonephric tubules begin to emerge on either side of the vertebral column extending from the upper thoracic region to mid-lumbar levels (Fig. 1.3a, b), with cranial tubules regressing by the end of week 5. The remaining tubules located in the upper three lumbar levels differentiate into cup-like pouches which extend medially to meet loops of capillaries emerging from the aorta (Fig. 1.3c). These structures are collectively referred to as a renal corpuscle and consist of the cup-like glomerular capsule and capillary plexus (Fig. 1.3d). During week 9, the mesonephric ducts regress in the female but persist in the male as part of the genital duct system including the ductus deferens, duct of epididymis, ejaculatory ducts, and seminal vesicles.

During the fifth week, the definitive kidneys or metanephroi begin to develop. Two sources give rise to the definitive kidneys: the ureteric bud (metanephric diverticulum) and the metanephrogenic blastema (metanephric mass of mesenchyme) (Fig. 1.4a). The ureteric buds emerge as outgrowths of the mesonephric ducts adjacent to their entrance into the cloaca. As they elongate, the ureteric buds invade the metanephrogenic blastema which grows from the caudal

J.M. McBride, Ph.D. (✉)
Cleveland Clinic, Lerner College of Medicine of Case
Western Reserve University, Cleveland Clinic/NA24,
9500 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44195, USA
e-mail: mcbridj@ccf.org

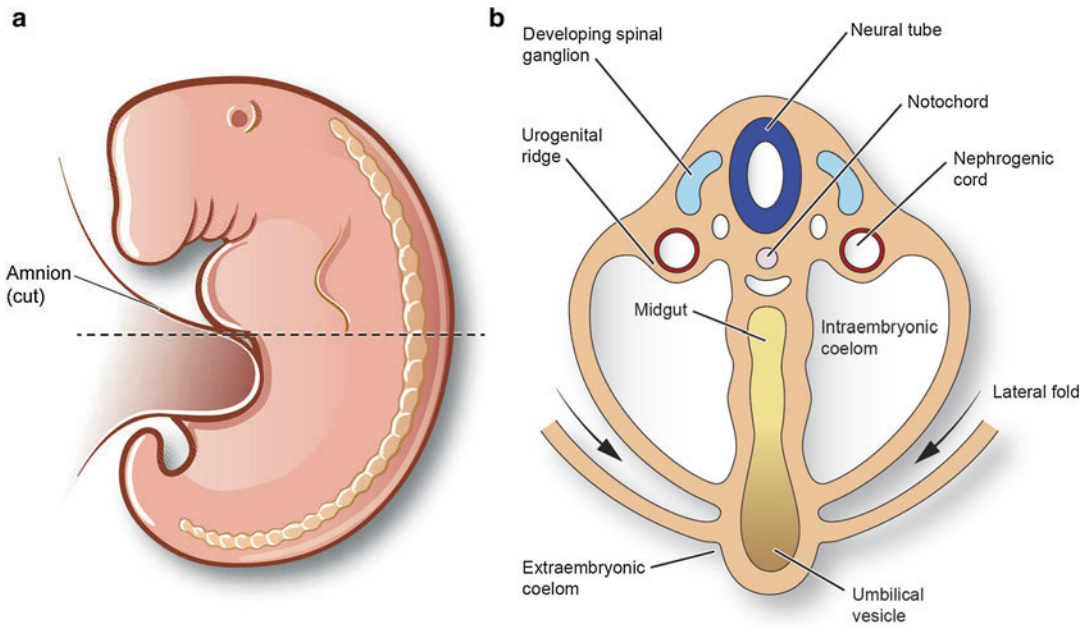


Fig. 1.1 (a) Lateral view of embryo in fourth week. (b) Transverse section demonstrating development of the urogenital ridge from the intermediate mesoderm (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)

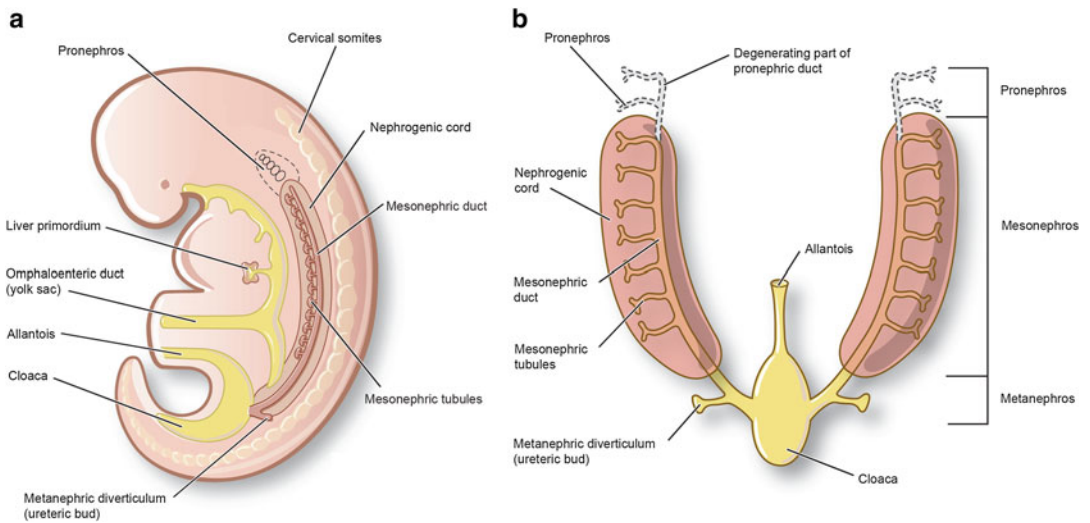


Fig. 1.2 Depiction of the nephric system transitions from the fourth to fifth week. (a) Lateral illustration of embryo in the fifth week with the development of the transitory pronephroi and pronephric ducts which open caudally into the cloaca. (b) Ventral view (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)

aspect of the nephrogenic cord. Penetration of the metanephric mesenchyme induces the ureteric bud to undergo a series of repetitive branchings, leading to formation of the renal collecting ducts

and tubules, calyces, and primitive renal pelvis (Fig. 1.4b-d). Reciprocally, the distal end of the bud induces the metanephric mesenchyme to condense and form metanephric vesicles which

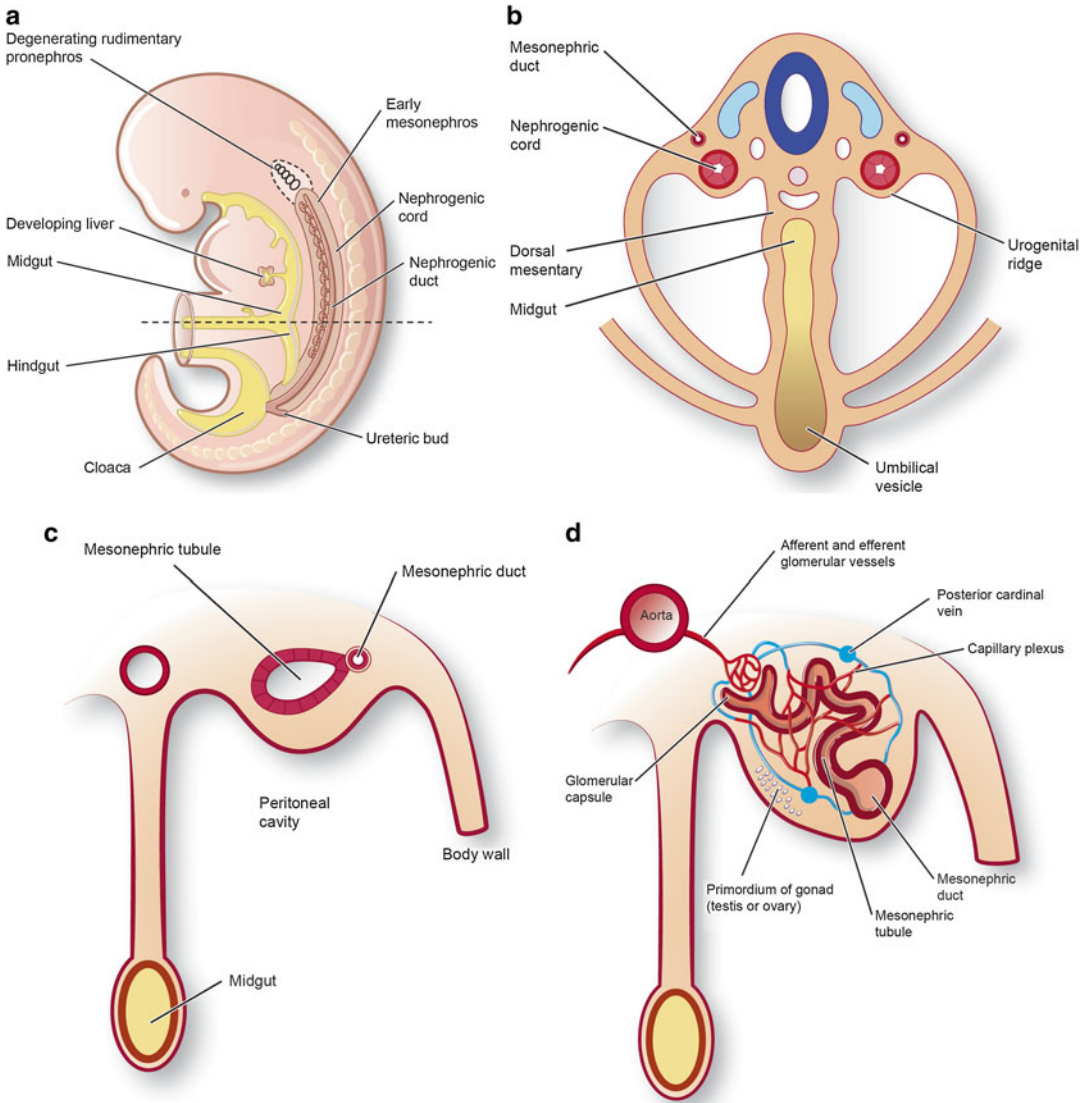


Fig. 1.3 (a) Lateral view indicating degeneration of the pronephros and emergence of the mesonephros. (b) Ventral view. (c) Sequential development of the mesonephric tubules from weeks 5 to 11. (d) The medial aspect

of the mesonephric tubules extends to meet loops of capillaries emerging from the aorta (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)

will further develop into a series of metanephric tubules (Fig. 1.5a, b). The connection formed between the lumens from these S-shaped metanephric tubules with that of the ureteric duct results in the formation of the definitive uriniferous tubule (Fig. 1.5c). These uriniferous tubules will further differentiate into proximal convoluted tubules, distal convoluted tubules, and the nephron loop including descending and ascending nephron loops (Fig. 1.5d).

During the tenth week, the metanephros become functional as the distal convoluted and collecting tubules begin to adjoin. In addition, the population of glomeruli further increases during this time up until week 32 of gestation. Nephrons also continue to form with approximately two million nephrons present in each kidney at term.

Between weeks 6 and 9, the kidneys withdraw from the pelvis and ascend along either side of the aorta to reach their permanent location along

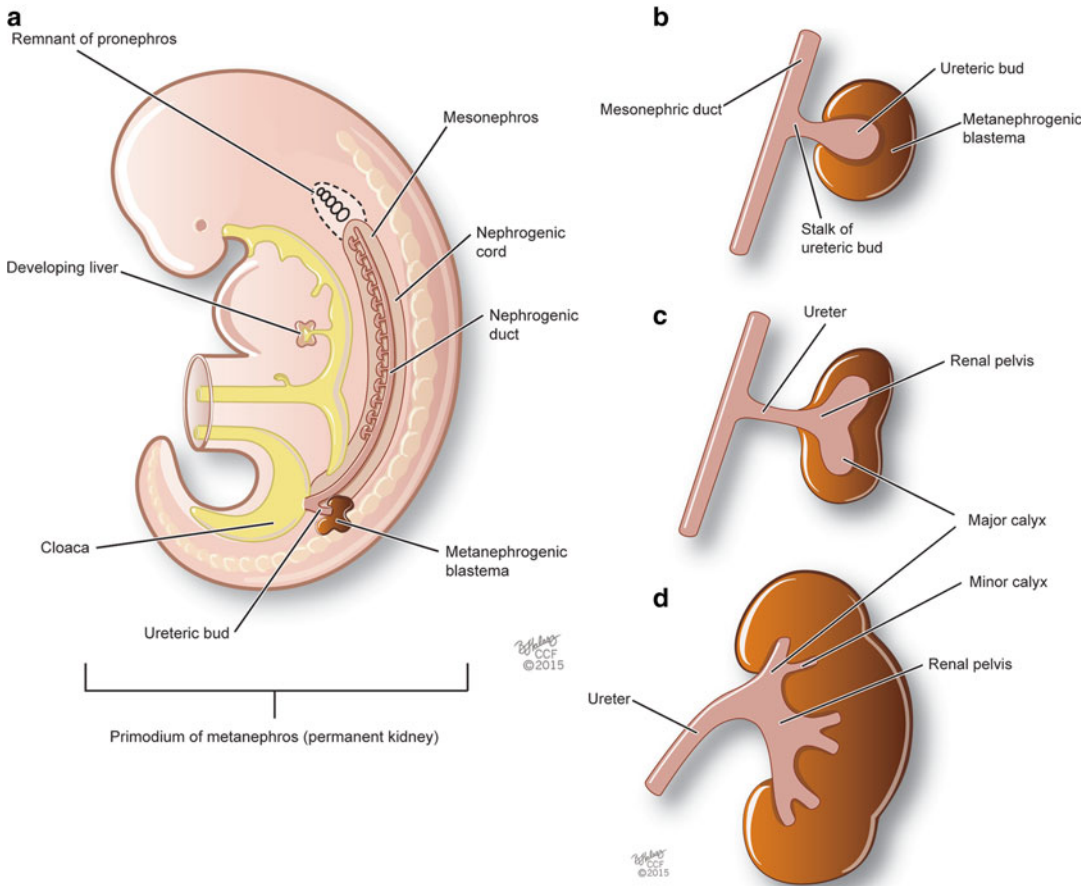


Fig. 1.4 Metanephros development from the ureteric bud and metanephrogenic blastema. (a) Lateral view of an embryo in the fifth week of development. (b–d) Sequential branching of the ureteric bud as it penetrates the meta-

nephric mesenchyme (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)

the posterior abdominal wall of the lumbar region (Fig. 1.6a–d). During their ascent, the kidneys' original blood supply from the common iliac arteries disappears with branches from successive levels of the aorta taking their place. After contacting the suprarenal glands, the kidneys become fixed in their position with primary arterial supply deriving from the abdominal aorta. Caudal arterial branches may remain as accessory renal arteries; typically, these branches arise from the aorta to enter the hilum of the kidney.

Anatomy of the Kidney

Overall Structure

The kidneys are reddish-brown bean-shaped structures located retroperitoneally along the posterior abdominal wall (Fig. 1.7). While posture and dynamic changes of the diaphragm can modify their relationship to surrounding structures, in the supine position, the kidneys typically extend

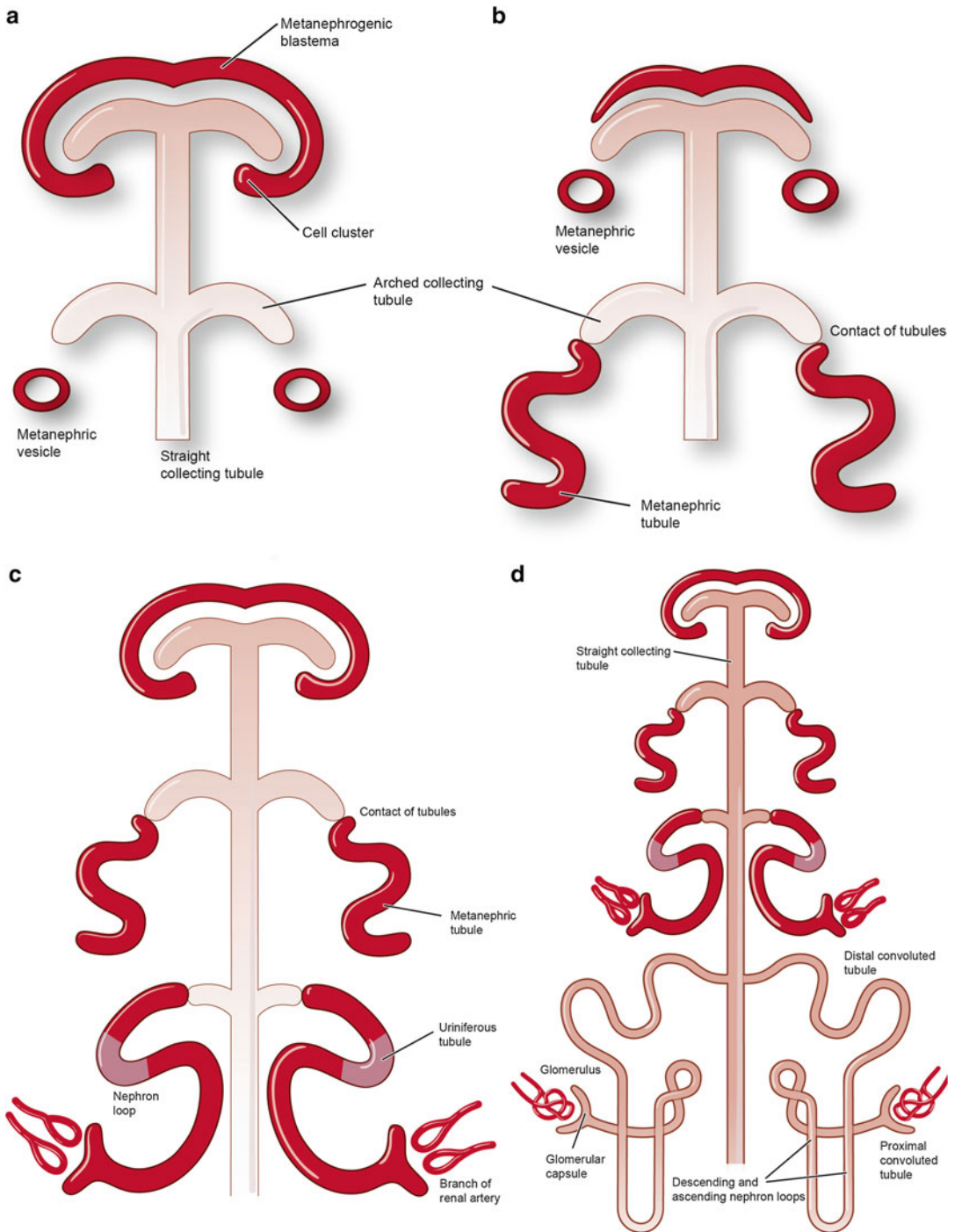


Fig. 1.5 Development of nephrons. (a) The distal end of the ureteric bud develops into a series of metanephric tubules. (b–d) These S-shaped structures, along with the ureteric duct, will form the uriniferous tubules (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)

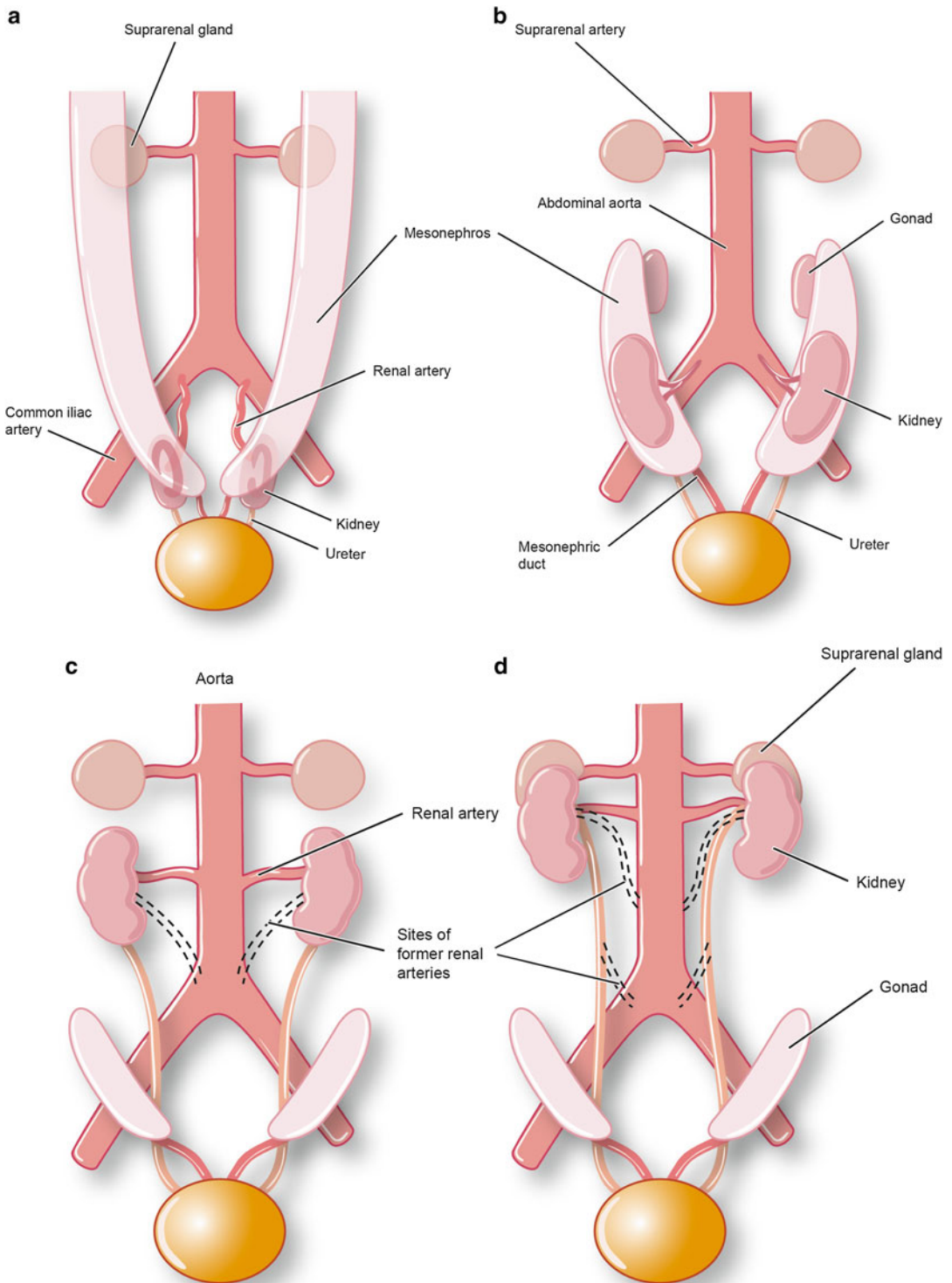
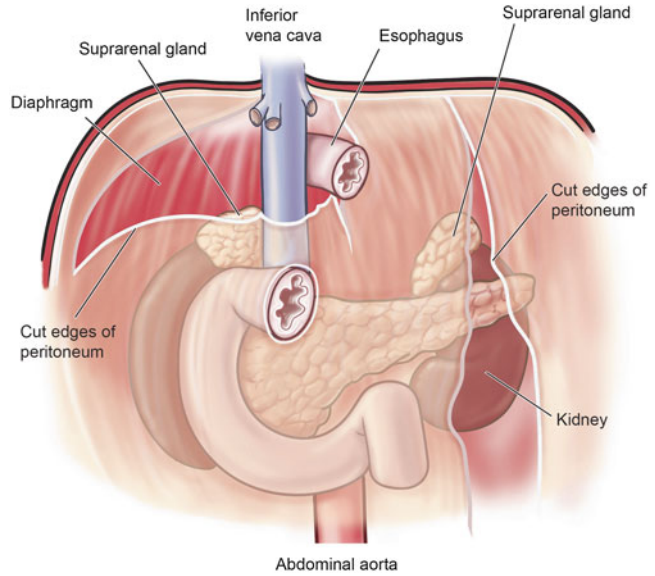


Fig. 1.6 Ventral abdominopelvic view of embryo from weeks 6 to 9. (a–d) The kidneys ascend alongside of the aorta to reach their permanent location in the lumbar

region of the posterior abdominal wall (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)

Fig. 1.7 Retroperitoneal location of the kidneys along the posterior abdominal wall (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)



from vertebral levels TXII–LIII. The right kidney occupies a position slightly lower due to its relationship with the liver superiorly. Conversely, the left kidney rests slightly closer to the midline, has a narrower profile, and is somewhat longer. On its medial surface, the kidneys are occupied by blood vessels, nerves, lymphatics, and the renal pelvis entering and exiting the concave-shaped hilum which faces anteriorly and medially.

Adjacent Structures

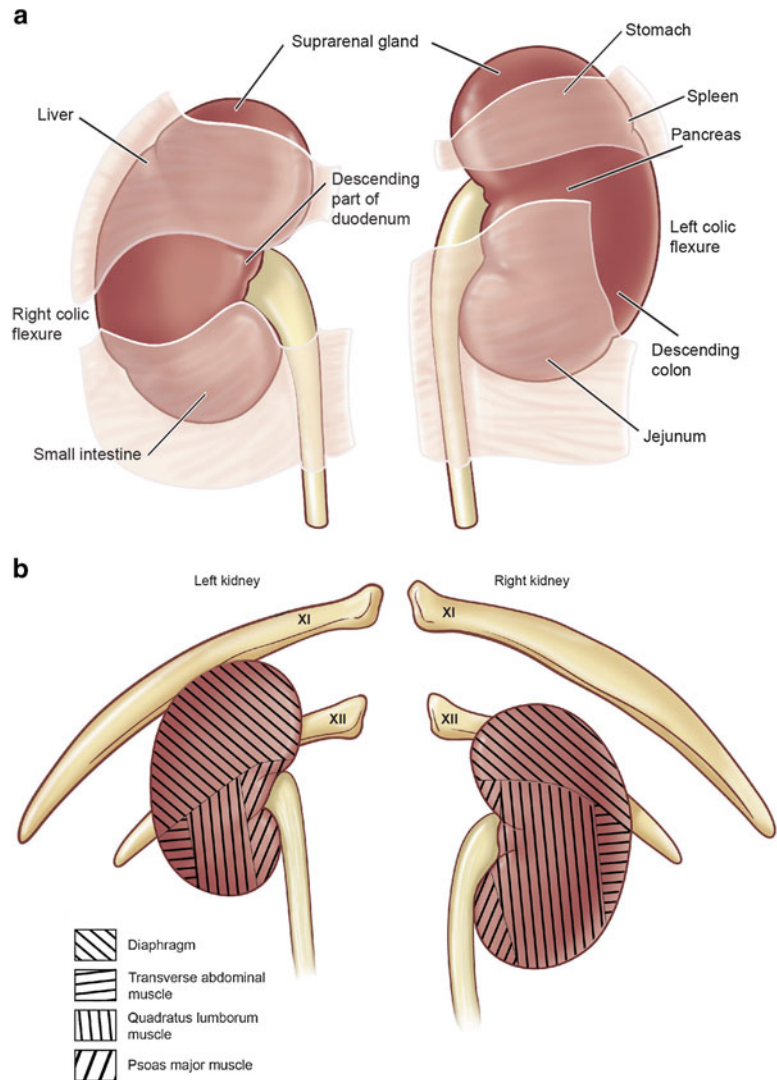
Due to their position in the paravertebral gutters along the posterior abdominal wall, the kidneys are in contact with the surfaces of several structures directly or through an intervening layer of peritoneum. Anteriorly, the left kidney is related to the spleen, suprarenal gland, stomach, pancreas, jejunum, descending colon, and left colic flexure (Fig. 1.8a). Alternatively, the anterior surface of the right kidney is related to the liver, suprarenal gland, small intestine, right colic flexure, and descending part of the duodenum. Posteriorly, both kidneys are related to the psoas major muscle, quadratus lumborum muscle, transversus abdominis muscle, diaphragm,

costodiaphragmatic recess, eleventh rib (left kidney only), twelfth rib, subcostal nerve, ilioinguinal nerve, and iliohypogastric nerve (Fig. 1.8b).

Fascial Contributions

The retroperitoneal connective tissue is organized around the kidneys to form interchanging layers of fascia and adipose tissue. In immediate contact with the kidney is the renal capsule, a fibrous layer which encapsulates the kidney, but it is histologically distinct from the renal parenchyma. Surrounding the renal capsule is the perinephric (perirenal) fat, an accumulation of adipose tissue from the extraperitoneal fatty layer (Fig. 1.9). Adjacent to the anterolateral aspect of the kidney and enclosing the perinephric fat are two layers extending from transversalis fascia that surround the kidney and are referred to as renal (Gerota's) fascia. Towards the midline, the anterior layer of renal fascia adjoins to the connective tissue of the inferior vena cava, aorta, or anterior layer from the opposing side. The posterior layer of renal fascia travels medially to adjoin to the fascia covering the anterior surface of the psoas major muscle. In addition to covering the

Fig. 1.8 Relationship of surrounding structures to the kidney. (a) Anterior surface. (b) Posterior surface (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)



kidney, renal fascia also encapsulates the suprarenal gland superiorly; however, an intervening septum ordinarily separates the two structures. A final outermost layer of adipose tissue, paranephric fat, is found posteriorly and lateral to the kidney residing between the posterior layer of renal fascia and transversalis fascia.

Arterial Supply, Venous Drainage, and Lymphatics

The renal arteries are the primary arterial supply to the kidneys and extend off of the abdominal

aorta between vertebral levels LI and LII (Fig. 1.10). Comparatively, the right renal artery emerges from the aorta slightly more superior and passes posterior to the inferior vena cava as it extends towards the kidney. As they course towards the kidney, the renal arteries give off several nonrenal branches which perfuse the adjacent renal capsule, ureters, and suprarenal glands. Just prior to reaching the renal hilum, they divide into five segmental arteries: superior/apical, anterosuperior, anteroinferior, inferior, and posterior. These terminal arteries are responsible for perfusing corresponding regions of the kidney. Clinically, this allows for identification of

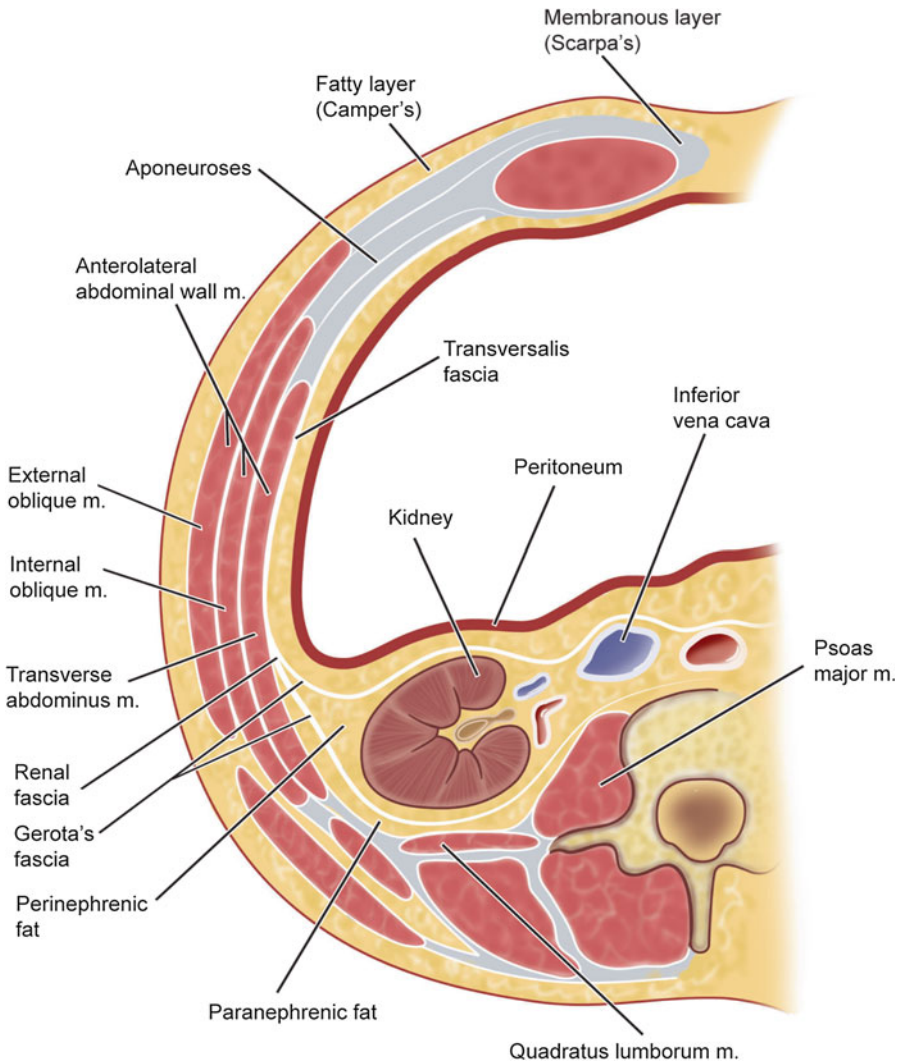


Fig. 1.9 Illustration of fascia and adipose tissue surrounding the kidney (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)

surgically resectable renal segments as the segmental branches exhibit very little anastomotic properties. Accessory renal arteries may also be present, originating directly from the abdominal aorta to enter the hilum or other level (extrahilar arteries) of the kidney.

Positioned anterior to the renal arteries are the renal veins that arise from several small branches exiting the renal hilum. Both veins converge on the inferior vena cava residing just right of mid-

line (Fig. 1.11). Due to the positioning of the inferior vena cava, the left renal vein is longer in length and passes anterior to the aorta and posterior to the descending segment of the superior mesenteric artery. This vascular relationship can be significantly compromised with the development of an aneurysm in either the aorta or superior mesenteric artery.

Lymphatic drainage from the kidneys, ureters, and suprarenal glands all coalesce into the left

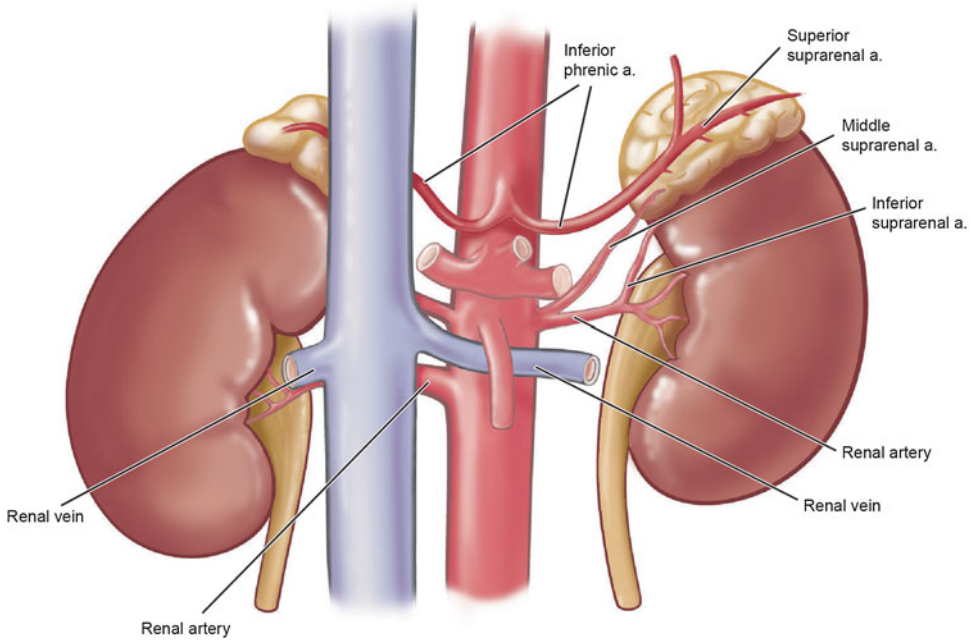


Fig. 1.10 Arterial supply to the kidney (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)

and right lateral lumbar (caval or aortic) nodes (Fig. 1.12). These nodes are located near the source of the renal arteries bilaterally [2].

Innervation

The kidneys receive nervous system input from the sympathetic nervous system originating from T12 to L1 levels of the spinal cord. These fibers form a renal plexus along the surface of the renal arteries and receive contributions from the celiac plexus, least splanchnic, and first lumbar splanchnic nerves (Fig. 1.13). Upon reaching the kidney, these fibers are responsible for regulating renal blood flow, salt and water reabsorption by the nephron, and glomerular filtration rate. In contrast to sympathetic nerve function, parasympathetic innervation does not appear to play a significant role in regulating kidney function [3].

Histology of the Kidney

Renal Capsule

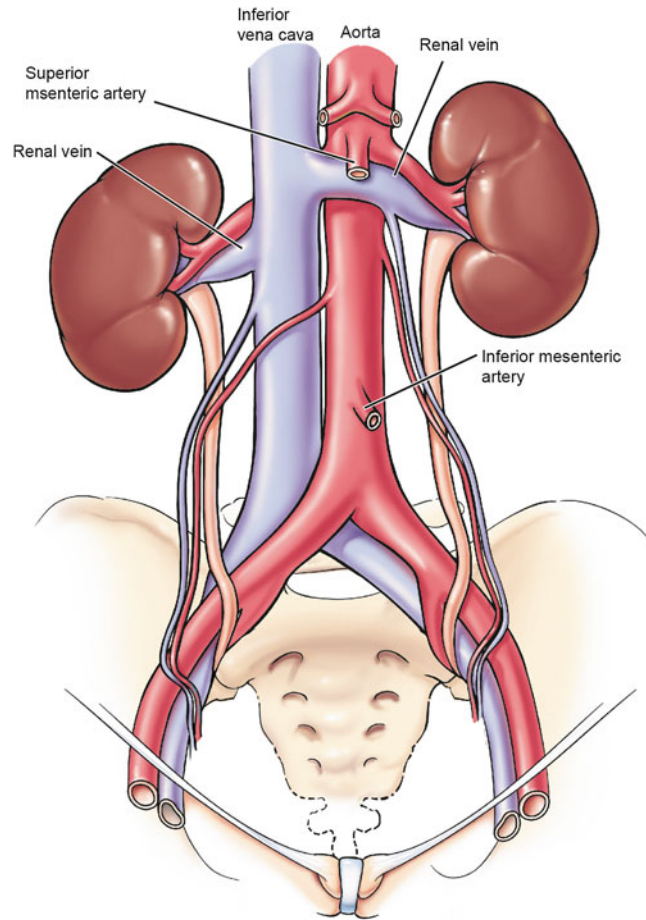
Externally, the kidney is surrounded by the renal capsule, a fibrous connective tissue structure weakly attached to the kidney surface. The capsule includes two discrete layers: an inner layer of myofibroblasts and an outer layer of collagen fibers and fibroblasts [4]. At the hilum, the capsule penetrates the area of the sinus to contribute to the connective tissue covering of the calyces and renal pelvis.

Parenchyma

Overview

When viewing the hemisected kidney, two regions are clearly visible: the centrally located medulla with inner and outer segments and the

Fig. 1.11 Venous drainage from the kidney (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)



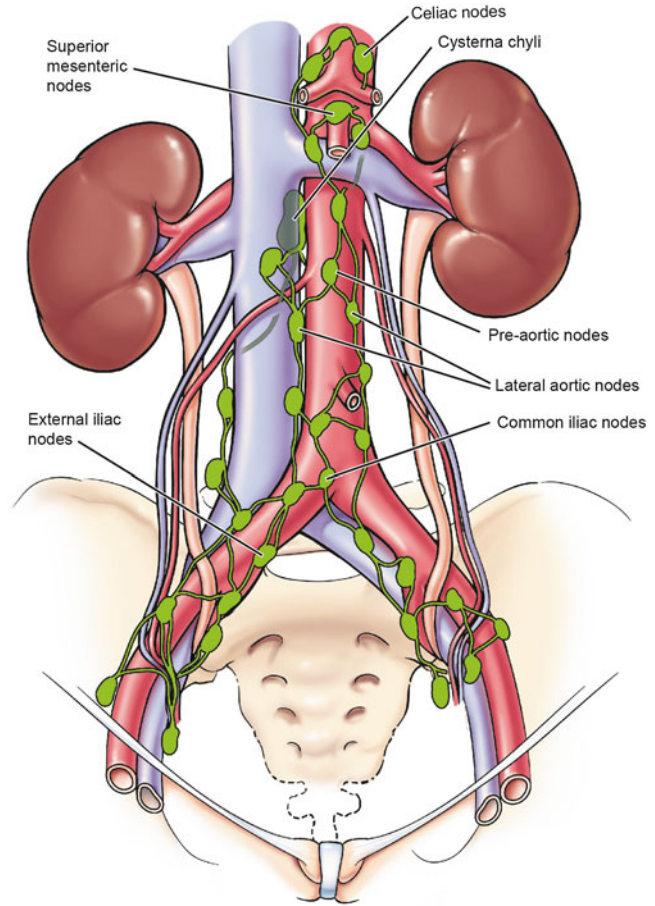
overlying cortex which is subdivided into an outer cortex and a juxtamedullary cortex sitting adjacent to the medullary pyramids (Fig. 1.14). Within each kidney, 8–12 conical-shaped medullary pyramids exist with their bases directed towards the overlying cortex. Between each pyramid, a segment of cortex interjects to form a renal column (of Bertin). The association of the medullary pyramids and their surrounding cortical tissue constitute a renal lobe, with the total number of lobes in the kidney determined by the number of pyramids present. Another level of organization of kidney parenchyma is the lobule which consists of a central medullary ray and the cortical tissue surrounding it. Interstitial tissue throughout the parenchyma is extremely scarce, consisting mostly of reticular tissue and some

collagenous fibers which surround blood vessels, large papillary ducts, and glomerular capsules.

Cortex

In the fresh state, the cortex appears brownish red, a coloring indicative of the extensive blood flow passing through the complex network of vasculature. Every minute, the kidneys receive approximately 20 % of the cardiac output, with 90 % directed towards the cortex and 10 % to the medulla. Populating the cortex are renal corpuscles and various segments of the tubule system including convoluted and straight tubules of the nephron, collecting tubules, and collecting ducts (Fig. 1.15). The renal corpuscle represents the initial, dilated portion of the nephron. Closer examination of this sphere-shaped structure

Fig. 1.12 Lymphatic drainage from the kidneys to the lateral lumbar (caval or aortic) nodes (reprinted with permission, Cleveland Clinic Center for Medical Art & Photography © 2015. All Rights Reserved)



reveals an accompanying capillary system known as the glomerulus. Situated between areas of renal corpuscles and their closely approximated convoluted and collecting tubules are areas of medullary rays which consist of straight tubules of the nephrons and collecting ducts.

Medulla

The medulla consists of 8–12 conical-shaped medullary pyramids and intervening areas of cortical tissue referred to as renal columns (Fig. 1.14). These structures contain the same cortical structures as described previously but are regarded as part of the medulla. Organizationally, the medullary pyramid and its surrounding cortical tissue constitute a lobe of the kidney, with 8–12 lobes present in a human kidney. Each lobe is further subdivided into lobules which consist

of a central medullary ray and surrounding cortical tissue. Within the medullary pyramids are straight tubules and collecting ducts which are accompanied by the vasa recta, a capillary network oriented in parallel to the tubules and ducts. The medullary pyramids are divided into an outer and inner medulla with the inner segment oriented towards the apical end or papilla. Each of these divisions contains specific segments of the nephron. The inner medulla contains the descending thin limbs, ascending thin limbs, and inner medullary collecting ducts. The outer medulla is further subdivided into an outer stripe with proximal straight tubules, distal straight tubules, and outer medullary collecting ducts and an inner stripe with descending thin limbs, distal straight tubules, and outer medullary collecting ducts. The collecting ducts open into a perforated region