

### Uric Acid

Uric acid is a product of the metabolic breakdown of **purine bases** with the formula  $C_5H_4N_4O_3$ . It forms ions and salts known as **urates** and acid urates.

In the liver, purines are metabolized into hypoxanthine, then to xanthine, and finally converted into uric acid by the enzyme **xanthine oxidase**. Once formed, uric acid is transported to the kidney and it is a normal component of urine.

### Urea

**Amino acids** can be oxidized by the body as an alternative source of energy. Conversion of amino acids into metabolic waste in the liver produces **ammonia** ( $NH_3$ ). If allowed to accumulate, it would raise the pH in cells to toxic levels. Therefore, many organisms convert ammonia to urea, even though this synthesis has a net energy cost. Urea, is an organic compound with chemical formula  $CO(NH_2)_2$ . Being practically neutral and highly soluble in water, urea is a safe vehicle for the body to transport and excrete excess nitrogen..

Urea also plays a role in the exchange system of the nephrons. Urea is reabsorbed in the **inner medullary collecting ducts**, thus raising the osmolarity in the **medullary interstitium**, which makes the thin descending limb of the loop of Henle reabsorb water.

The **blood urea nitrogen (BUN)** is a measure of the amount of nitrogen in the blood that comes from urea. It is used as a marker of renal function, though it is inferior to other markers such as creatinine because blood urea levels are influenced by other factors such as diet, dehydration, and liver function.



By ThereamDream

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