



MENDEZ NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TRANSPLANTATION FOUNDATION

GET THE FACTS! GET CHECKED! GET HEALTHY! **Kidney Disease Awareness & Prevention**

GET THE FACTS!

About 1 in 7 Americans may have kidney disease.

It's estimated that more than 37 million people have it, and most don't know because early kidney disease can occur with no signs or symptoms.

As many as 9 in 10 people are unaware that they have kidney disease.

Healthy Kidneys do many vital things:

- They produce urine to help carry waste out of the body.
- They balance the chemicals in your blood, such as calcium, sodium, and potassium. This process is necessary for your body to work properly.
- They produce hormones that help regulate your blood pressure and help make red blood cells, which give you energy.

Kidney disease affects people of all ages, and it happens when the kidneys become damaged and can't filter blood like they should. This damage can cause wastes to build up in the body and be harmful.

Early kidney disease can occur without signs or symptoms. You may not feel any different until your kidney disease is very advanced. When kidney disease becomes advanced or is untreated, the kidneys can stop working, which is called **kidney failure** or **end-stage renal disease**. The treatment for kidney failure is dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Diabetes and high blood pressure are the most common causes of kidney disease. These conditions can damage your kidneys over many years without you feeling sick or having symptoms. About 1 in 3 people with diabetes have kidney disease, and 1 in 5 people with high blood pressure have kidney disease.

When kidney disease occurs over a short period of time, it's called **acute kidney injury**. The sudden change in kidney function from acute kidney injury may be due to illness, injury, or certain medications.

When kidney disease occurs slowly over a long period of time or when acute kidney disease causes kidney damage that lasts for several months it's called **chronic kidney disease (CKD)**.

African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans tend to have a greater risk of chronic kidney disease or kidney failure; some of this is due to having higher rates of diabetes and high blood pressure within these groups. But asking your doctor for a simple blood and urine test each year could help you detect kidney disease at an early stage and may prevent you from developing kidney disease and kidney failure!

Kidney disease may be prevented or slowed down, but it must first be detected and treated.

Signs of advanced kidney disease may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Swollen ankles, feet, and hands
- Fatigue or weakness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Decrease in appetite
- Nauseousness
- Blood in urine or foamy urine
- Change in frequency of urination

If you are experiencing a number of these symptoms, it's extremely important to contact your doctor.

Remember, you are at risk for kidney disease if you have any of these conditions:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- A family history of kidney failure

GET CHECKED!

It's important to get tested if you have the key risk factors for kidney disease: diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, or a family history of kidney failure. It's also important to have your blood pressure checked, as high blood pressure can cause kidney disease.

Blood and urine tests are the only way to know if you have kidney disease:

- A blood test checks your glomerular filtration rate (GFR), which tells how well your kidneys are filtering.
- A urine test checks for protein in your urine.

Talk to your doctor about how often you should get tested, because the sooner you know you have kidney disease, the sooner you can get treatment to help delay or prevent kidney failure!

GET HEALTHY!

Follow these helpful tips to keep your kidneys healthy:

- See your doctor on a regular basis and talk about your health concerns.
- Keep your blood pressure at the target range set by your doctor.
- If you have diabetes, control your blood glucose level.
- Keep your cholesterol levels at the target range.
- Take your medicines according to your doctor's instructions.
- Cut back on salt.
- Eat healthy foods for your heart: fresh fruit, fresh or frozen vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy foods.
- Limit your alcohol intake.
- Be physically active.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Don't smoke!

Remember, it's very important to talk to your doctor about the following:

- Discuss the risk factors you may have for kidney disease.
- Discuss how often you should be tested for kidney disease.
- Ask your doctor these specific questions:
 - What is my GFR?
 - What is my urine albumin result?
 - What is my blood pressure (target is less than 140/90 mm Hg)?
 - What is my blood glucose (if you have diabetes)?

To learn more about kidney disease, kidney failure, and prevention visit www.niddk.nih.gov