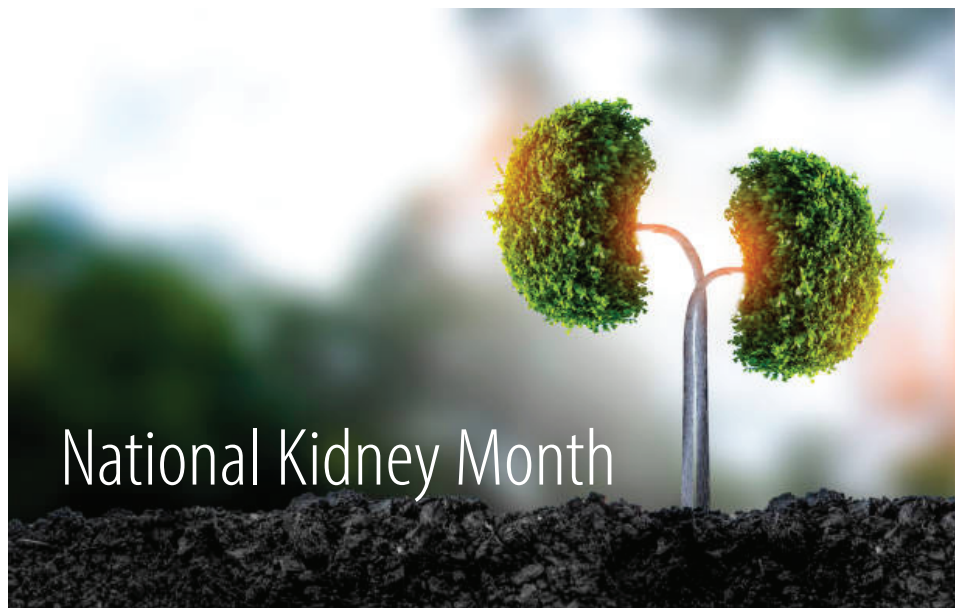




"March is **Kidney Health Month**, a time to spread **Awareness** about Kidney Disease. The kidneys' main job is to filter extra water and wastes out of your blood to make urine. To keep your body working properly, the kidneys balance the salts and minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, sodium, and potassium, that circulate in the blood. Your kidneys also make hormones that help control blood pressure, make red blood cells, and keep your bones strong."



How can I improve my kidney health?

You can protect your kidneys by managing or preventing health conditions that cause kidney damage, such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

Take 5 for Your Kidneys

You can do 5 simple things to protect your kidneys:

1. Get Tested! Ask your healthcare provider for an ACR urine test or a GFR blood test annually if you have diabetes, high blood pressure, are over age 60, or have a family history of kidney failure.

2. Reduce NSAIDs. Over the counter pain medicines, such as NSAIDs (Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as Ibuprofen/Advil/Motrin, Naproxen/Aleve, Celecoxib/Celebrex, and Aspirin), may alleviate your aches and pains, but they can harm the kidneys, especially if you already have kidney disease. Reduce your regular use of NSAIDs and never go over the recommended dosage.

3. Cut the Processed Foods. Processed foods can be significant sources of sodium, nitrates and phosphates, and have been linked to cancer, heart disease and kidney disease. Try adopting the DASH diet to guide your healthy eating habits.

4. Exercise Regularly. Your kidneys like it when you exercise. Regular exercise will keep your bones, muscles, blood vessels, heart and kidneys healthy. Getting active for at least 30 minutes a day can also help you control blood pressure and lower blood sugar, which is vital to kidney health.

5. Control Blood Pressure and Diabetes. High blood pressure and diabetes are the leading causes of kidney disease and kidney failure. Managing high blood pressure and strict control of blood sugar levels can slow the progression of kidney disease. Speak with your healthcare provider if you are having trouble managing diabetes or high blood pressure.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

Early CKD has no signs or symptoms and most (as many as 90%) people who have kidney disease aren't aware their kidneys are damaged until the disease is more advanced.

Some of the early warning signs and symptoms you may notice include:

- Frequent or painful urination
- Puffy face and eyes, swollen hands and feet
- Lack of energy
- Evening muscle cramps
- Poor appetite
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Dry, itchy skin
- High blood pressure or blood sugar
- Blood in or foamy urine

Early detection is key to prevent the progression of kidney disease to kidney failure. Know your risk factors and get tested. Your kidneys work hard for you every day. They regulate blood pressure, activate vitamin D for healthy bones, filter toxins and wastes from the body and so much more.

Unhealthy kidneys can cause:

- Heart attack or stroke
- Nerve damage
- Anemia
- High blood pressure

Be good to your kidneys by:

- Lowering your intake of salt/sodium.
- Aiming for at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day.
- Maintaining good blood glucose control if you have diabetes.
- Eating less pre-made, highly processed foods.
- Cooking meals from scratch at home more often.
- Adding more plant-based foods such as vegetables and whole grains like barley, quinoa and steel cut oats to your diet.