

Health Awareness

Have More Healthy Moments: Get Tested and Follow Your Kidney Health

(NAPS)—Kidney disease is often referred to as a “silent disease” because there are usually no symptoms during its early stages. In fact, as many as 90% of Americans who have chronic kidney disease (CKD) don’t know they have the disease until it is advanced.

CKD is estimated to affect more than 1 in 7 adults in the United States. The good news is the earlier you find out you have kidney disease, the sooner you can take steps to protect your kidneys from further damage. By getting tested for CKD and following your kidney health, you may help keep your kidneys healthier for longer and give yourself more healthy moments.

Know Your Risk

Even if you feel healthy and have no symptoms, ask your doctor about getting tested for kidney disease. If you are over 60 or have any risk factors for kidney disease—such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, a history of acute kidney injury or a family history of CKD—you may be at increased risk.

Early diagnosis gives you and your health care team time to develop a plan to slow kidney disease progression. The plan can also reduce your risk for other health problems, such as heart attack and stroke. Damage from kidney disease usually cannot be reversed, but treatment can help prevent further kidney damage and allow you to live a full life.

Schedule Your Test

Testing for CKD involves two quick tests. A blood test checks how well your kidneys are filtering your blood. A urine test checks for protein in your urine, which is a sign of kidney damage. Contact your doctor’s office—or a community health center if you don’t have a regular doctor—to schedule your kidney tests and find out how your kidneys are doing. You may be nervous about getting your kidneys tested but finding and treating kidney disease early gives you the best chance of staying healthier longer.

Follow Your Kidney Health

Keep your appointments even if you feel well. Your doctor may repeat testing each year, or more often if needed, and use the changes in your results to plan the next steps for your care. If your kidney function is stable, your care team may



recommend you continue doing what you’re doing. If your kidney function seems to be getting worse, the team may suggest lifestyle or medicine changes.

Be proactive! Keep your kidneys healthy by following a kidney-healthy lifestyle.

- Manage your blood pressure and blood glucose levels.
- Talk with your doctor or pharmacist before taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen (e.g., Advil) or naproxen (e.g., Aleve).
- Be active for at least 30 minutes each day.
- Aim for 7 to 8 hours or more of sleep each night.
- Quit smoking.
- Consult a registered dietitian to build a meal plan you can stick to.

If financial or resource challenges make it hard for you to follow your care plan—including getting to medical appointments, paying for medicines, or buying healthy food—ask your care team for help.

“For people with kidney disease, working with a health care team is key to an early diagnosis and to staying on top of their kidney health,” said National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) Director Dr. Griffin P. Rodgers. “As we continue to research new ways to prevent and treat kidney disease, there are steps people can take today to improve and maintain the health of their kidneys—and enjoy more healthy moments.”

For more information on getting tested for CKD and following your kidney health, visit the NIDDK website at www.niddk.nih.gov.