

## Shining a Spotlight on Kidney Health: Get to Know Your Kidneys



### Get to Know Your Kidneys

**The more you know about your kidneys, the better they can keep you healthy.**

(NAPS)—What better time to get to know your kidneys than National Kidney Month?

Your kidneys play a vital role in keeping your body functioning, which is why healthy kidneys are important to your overall health.

Your kidneys are two bean-shaped organs located just below your rib cage, one on each side of your spine. Working around the clock, your kidneys filter approximately 150 quarts of blood each day, removing waste and extra fluid from your body.

People can get kidney disease at any age, even children. Kidney disease means your kidneys are damaged and can't filter blood the way they should.

Taking steps to protect your kidneys can help keep your body healthy and may prevent or slow the progression of kidney disease. It's never too early to take steps to keep your kidneys healthy. Even small steps can make a big difference.

Talk with a health care professional about kidney disease risk factors and develop a plan together to address those risks. You may be at a higher risk for kidney disease if you have diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, a history of acute kidney injury or a family history of kidney disease.

Help maintain your kidneys by following healthy habits:

- Manage diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease by working with a health care professional.
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes each day.
- Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.
- Quit smoking and limit your alcohol intake.
- Try to eat healthy foods and stay hydrated.
- Manage stress.

It takes time to build healthy habits, but the benefits to your health are worth it. Start small and reach out for support when needed.

Stay informed about your kidney health! Early on, kidney disease often

has no symptoms. In fact, as many as 90% of people who have kidney disease don't know they have it. If you are over 60 or have risk factors for kidney disease at any age, ask a health care professional about getting tested. Testing involves a blood test and a urine test. Contact your health care professional's office or a community health center near you to schedule your kidney tests. The earlier you find out you have kidney disease, the sooner you can take steps to protect your kidneys from further damage.

As you work to keep your kidneys healthy, the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), part of the National Institutes of Health, is supporting research to prevent, monitor and treat kidney disease. NIDDK's Kidney Precision Medicine Project (KPMP) is one example of research aimed at discovering the biology of kidney health and disease. KPMP works to improve future kidney care tailored to the individual patient. Another NIDDK-supported study, the Chronic Kidney Disease in Children Study (CKiD), looks at how kidney disease affects the development of heart disease, brain function and growth in children, and works to identify risk factors for kidney disease progression. These and many other NIDDK research studies are offering promising insights into improving and maintaining kidney health.

"While NIDDK invests in innovative research to improve kidney disease prevention and treatment, we encourage people to learn about the critical functions our kidneys perform every day to keep us alive," said NIDDK Director Dr. Griffin P. Rodgers. "Taking simple steps now to protect and preserve kidney health can be lifesaving and make a tremendous difference in long-term health and well-being."

To learn more about kidney health this National Kidney Month, visit the NIDDK website at [www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov) and follow NIDDK on social media @NIDDKgov.