

# Health Awareness

## Managing Chronic Kidney Disease: Take Charge Of Your Health

(NAPS)—Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a serious condition, affecting 15% of U.S. adults—an estimated 37 million Americans. Kidney disease can get worse over time and may lead to kidney failure and other serious complications.

Early-stage CKD has few or no symptoms. In fact, many people with CKD don't know they have the disease. Ask your doctor if you are at risk and get tested. Early diagnosis can make a big difference.

Managing CKD may be challenging, but it is key to preventing or delaying serious health problems such as heart disease. The earlier you get involved in your kidney care, the better your chances of slowing disease progression and living longer and healthier.

Take an active role in managing your kidney disease by following these healthy lifestyle tips.

- **Meet regularly with your health care team.** Stay connected with your doctor, either in person or via telehealth. Meet with your health care team for help managing CKD, keep appointments even if you feel OK and create a care plan. Ask your doctor to explain test results and bring a list of questions or concerns to appointments.
- **Manage blood pressure.** Work with your health care team to develop a plan to meet your blood pressure goals. Steps to meet those goals may include eating heart-healthy and low-sodium meals and being active.
- **Monitor blood glucose levels.** Check your blood glucose level regularly if you have diabetes. Use the results to guide decisions about food, physical activity and medicines.
- **Take medicines as prescribed.** Your pharmacist and doctor need to know about all the medicines you take, including over-the-counter medicines. Tell your doctor about any side effects before stopping or changing how you take your medicine.
- **Avoid nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen and naproxen.** NSAIDs are sold under many different brand names, so ask your pharmacist or doctor if the medicines are safe for you to use.
- **Stay up to date on vaccinations.** The COVID-19 vaccine is especially important for people who may be more likely to get very sick from COVID-19, including people with certain medical conditions such as kidney disease.
- **Aim for a healthy weight.** If you are overweight or have obesity, work



**Take an active role in managing your chronic kidney disease to live a longer, healthier life.**

with your health care team to create a weight-loss plan.

- **Develop a healthy meal plan.** Create a meal plan that contains kidney-healthy foods and beverages. Ask your doctor about finding a registered dietitian who can help.
- **Find ways to reduce stress and make physical activity part of your routine.** Consider healthy, stress-reducing activities and get at least 30 minutes of physical activity daily.
- **Get enough sleep.** Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night. Try establishing a bedtime routine if you have trouble sleeping.
- **Quit smoking.** Smoking cigarettes can make kidney damage worse.

If you have financial or resource challenges that make it difficult to start or maintain these behaviors—such as difficulty paying for medicines, providing enough food for you and your family or finding a safe place for physical activity—ask your health care team about support programs that may be available to help.

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) spearheads research to help improve kidney disease management and treatment. “It’s important to educate patients and their health care providers about ways to treat and manage chronic kidney disease,” said NIDDK Director Dr. Griffin P. Rodgers. “People should know their risk factors, like underlying health conditions. And they should know that, if diagnosed, chronic kidney disease is manageable. Staying engaged and managing the disease’s progression protects the kidneys.”

For more information on managing CKD, visit the NIDDK website at [www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov).