

Protect Your Kidneys, Save Your Heart

Enhancing Lives Affected by Kidney Disease - Vision of International Kidney Foundation

The International Kidney Foundation has designated the second Thursday of March as World Kidney Day. Since its inception in 2006, their campaign each year focuses on a single theme to help bring awareness to kidney disease which is life-altering. On March 10th, the 2011 campaign will emphasize the connection between Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) and Cardiovascular Disease with the slogan *Protect Your Kidneys, Save Your Heart*. We support their mission to help spread this message to the Railroad membership, loved ones, co-workers, and neighbors.

Risk Factors of Contracting Kidney Disease

The main function of our kidneys is to remove toxins and excess water from our blood and by doing so, help control blood pressure. High blood pressure is the major cause of CKD and Cardiovascular Disease and according to the International Kidney Foundation, you are at increased risk for kidney disease if:

- you are older
- you already have diabetes
- you have high blood pressure
- you do not exercise and have unhealthy dietary habits
- you have a family history or family member with CKD
- you are African American, Hispanic American, Asian, Pacific Islander, or American Indian

Important Statistics Concerning Kidney Disease

According to the International Kidney Foundation, the economic impact of kidney disease is astronomical due to its effects from life-long disabilities to death from chronic renal and cardiovascular disease. It is more important than ever to raise awareness of this disease by encouraging screenings for those at risk, for those individuals who already have hypertension and/or diabetes and to educate both the patient and the medical professional about their role in detecting and reducing the risks of CKD.

- There are about 240 million people with diabetes worldwide and this figure is expected to rise to 380 million by 2025.
- About 40% of people with diabetes will develop CKD which increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and other complications from diabetes.
- Individuals with hypertension, diabetes and kidney disease are at a higher risk of End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).
- The global cost for dialysis and kidney transplants over the next decade is expected to exceed one trillion dollars.

Know the Warning Signs of Kidney Disease

Kidney disease usually affects both kidneys and, unfortunately, many forms of kidney disease do not produce symptoms until the individual suffers kidney failure. Kidney disease develops slowly, and discovering it early is key. One of the most common forms of kidney disease is CKD, and the majority of individuals that have it go undetected. There are, however, some warning signs that individuals should pay attention to:

- high blood pressure
- blood and/or protein in urine
- a glomerular filtration rate of less than 60 (measures kidney function)
- more frequent urination and/or with pain or difficulty
- puffiness around eyes and swelling of hands and feet

Manage Your Kidney Health – Seven Golden Rules

While kidney disease is generally a silent killer that affects your quality of life, there are several ways to reduce your risk. The International Kidney Foundation recommends following seven golden rules that will help everyone lower their risk for other diseases which contribute to the onset of kidney disease.

Stay Fit & Active ~ Eat Healthy & Monitor Weight

Control Blood Sugar Level ~ Monitor Blood Pressure ~ Do Not Smoke

Minimize Over the Counter Pill Intake ~ Check Kidney Function if at Risk

For More Information

To learn more about how you can keep your kidneys healthy, visit www.kidney.org or contact them directly at their toll free number of 1-800-622-9010. For more information about World Kidney Day visit www.worldkidneyday.org.