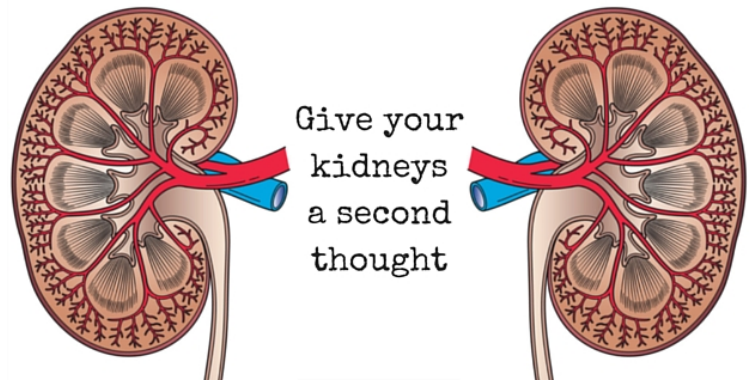


## KIDNEY AWARENESS WEEK

***Kidney disease can kill. Ten thousand South African, men and women, young and old, will die of kidney disease or kidney failure every year. It is important that we educate ourselves around the importance of this vital organ.***



### Avoid Dialysis or Transplants

The first week of September marks Kidney Awareness Week in South Africa and it highlights the need to have one's kidney functions checked early before chronic kidney disease sets in.

Others are luckier and can be treated by dialysis or a kidney transplant. There are also other kidney conditions which don't require dialysis, but which adversely affect the lives of thousands of sufferers. All of these conditions require early detection, and many can be prevented. Potentially fatal kidney disorders occur three to four times more commonly in our underprivileged African population.

In ancient times it was believed that the kidneys were the source of our morality and ethics, the seat of our feelings, our conscience and yearnings. While today we know that this is not true; we do know that these bean-shaped organs are vital to our well-being.

These little organs are remarkably complexed organs that acts as the filter system of the body; as well as keeping the whole body in a state of chemical balance. The kidneys ensures that all harmful and helpful substances in the body, are kept in tight limits to ensure that the body functions optimally. This process is referred to as the renal function.

Another important function of the kidney is the regulation of your blood pressure, and the make up of the blood. The kidneys can produce hormones that tells bones when to make more blood cells; also every time our hearts beats, the kidney gets about 20 percent of the blood that is pumped. When the kidneys don't receive enough blood; they will start to deteriorate. The kidney also ensure that the level of minerals such as sodium and potassium in the blood stream is controlled. They ensure that the blood pressure is prevented from getting too high.

It's important that the body contains the correct amount of water and this is an essential function of the kidneys. They regulate the amount of water and salt in your body; by filtering out any excess water and helping to maintain the body's chemical balance.

As we all know kidneys are the 'factory' where urine is manufactured. Kidneys are essential in ensuring that waste and toxins are removed from the body in the form of urine and they ensure that useful substances such as glucose and proteins are kept in the body.

Complications related to Chronic Kidney Diseases (CKD) is the root cause of millions of individuals dying prematurely. CKD is a dangerous medical condition characterised by a gradual loss of kidney function over time that, if left untreated, can then lead to chronic renal failure (CRF). Once you have reached end-stage chronic renal failure you have two options - dialysis for the rest of your life, or a kidney transplant. CKD has been estimated to affect as much as 15% of the South African population. According to the National Kidney Foundation of South Africa, it also represents a growing healthcare problem with some 20 000 new patients requiring diagnosis and treatment every year. 10% of all people in the world have some form of kidney disease. Kidney failure in South African adults is mainly due to inherited Hypertension (60-65%) or Type 2 Diabetes (another 20-25%).

Preventive behaviour is a must focusing on weight management, not smoking, keeping fit, watching sugar intake, monitoring blood pressure and eating a healthy and varied diet. However, salt and high blood pressure are two silent killers. In other words, by the time many (not all) people present with symptoms and signs of kidney disease (especially hypertension and diabetes), it may be too late to prevent serious kidney and/or cardio-vascular dysfunction.

## SYMPTOMS



You are encouraged to visit a doctor if you display the following symptoms:

- Have persistent puffiness around the eyes
- Have trouble sleeping
- Your appetite is poor
- Experience dry and itchy skin
- See blood or foam in your urine
- Your ankles and feet are swollen
- You are more tired than usual
- If your muscles are continuously cramping, or
- Feel the need to urinate more often

## 8 GOLDEN RULES OF KEEPING YOUR KIDNEYS HEALTHY

- **Don't smoke** - People who smoke are 3 times more likely to have reduced kidney function and have a 4-5 times greater risk of heart attack and stroke.
- **Eat healthy and keep your weight in check** - The food you eat plays a huge role in the health and wellbeing of your body. As well as providing the body with a variety of nutrients, diet can also help in weight reduction and weight control. People with kidney disease may need to make some dietary changes to help manage their condition.
- **Maintain a healthy fluid intake** - it is recommended to drink 1.5 to 2 litres of water per day. Make water your drink of choice. Water assists in transporting nutrients around the body, as well as helping to eliminate waste. It contains no kilojoules, and in most areas of South Africa tap water is excellent with good mineral content.
- **Keep fit and active** - Good health and wellbeing means that we are healthy from all dimensions of our lives – physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. The benefits of regular exercise are wide-reaching. Not only can it help to maintain and reduce weight, it can also reduce the risk of developing heart disease and diabetes, risk factors for kidney disease. You only need to exercise for 30 minutes on at least five days a week to reap the benefits – a brisk walk is sufficient.
- **Monitor your blood pressure and keep regular control of your blood sugar level**
- **Don't take over-the-counter pills on a regular basis**
- **Limit alcohol** - Excessive alcohol intake can lead to heart disease and high blood pressure, increasing the risk of kidney disease.

**Get your kidney function checked if you have on or more of the  
"high risk"  
factors, such as diabetes or hypertension.**



**PHOENIX**  
HEALTHCARE CONSULTANTS

# THANK YOU

SOURCE

<https://www.uhhospitals.org/Healthy-at-UH/articles/2019/08/why-kidney-health-is-vital-to-your-overall-well-being>  
<https://www.now-health.com/en/blog/4-reasons-why-your-kidneys-are-important/>  
<http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=6719>