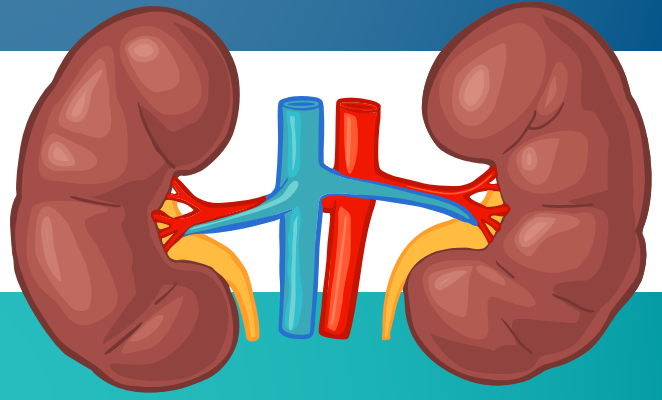


MARCH IS KIDNEY AWARENESS MONTH

Know whether you're at risk and take action



March is Kidney Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness about kidney health, the risk factors for kidney disease and what support is available.



What is kidney disease?

Kidney (renal) disease occurs when your kidneys lose their ability to filter waste, excess fluids and toxins from your blood. Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a progressive condition that can lead to kidney failure and will require dialysis or a transplant to survive.

What causes CKD?



High blood pressure (hypertension)



Diabetes



Heart disease



Genetic conditions



Chronic infections or inflammation



Long-term use of pain relievers or anti-inflammatories

What are common symptoms of CKD?

In the early stages of CKD, you may have very few signs or symptoms. You might not realise you have kidney disease until you have lost 60% to 70% of your kidney function. Be alert to signs, such as:



Swelling in the legs, feet and around the eyes



Shortness of breath



Fatigue and difficulty sleeping well



Muscle cramps (especially during the night)



Persistent itchy skin



Changes in urination (i.e. increased frequency or difficulty urinating)

How can I get tested?

Ask your doctor to do a blood or urine test if you are at risk or have symptoms indicating CKD.

- If CKD is detected early and managed appropriately, you can slow or even stop the deterioration of kidney function and reduce the risk of cardiovascular complications.
- CKD is largely preventable and can be detected early with simple blood and urine tests.

Can CKD be treated?

Yes – however, treatment for chronic kidney disease focuses on slowing the progression of kidney damage, usually by controlling the cause. But even controlling the cause might not keep kidney damage from progressing. Early detection of failing kidney function allows CKD to be treated with medication, diet and lifestyle changes that can slow the progression of the disease, reduce the risk of associated heart attacks and strokes and improve your quality of life.

Kidney dialysis may be needed if there is a sudden loss of kidney function or when your kidney function has significantly progressed. Dialysis is used as a temporary measure in either acute kidney injury or for people with CKD who are waiting for a kidney transplant, and as a permanent measure where a transplant is not possible.

WHAT IS DIALYSIS?

Dialysis is a way to remove waste products from the body. Your doctor will prescribe the option most suitable for you.



The two main types of dialysis are:

HEMODIALYSIS is done by means of a machine that filters and cleans the blood outside the body. It is usually done three times a week at a hospital renal facility.

PERITONEAL DIALYSIS is done through an implant in the inner lining of the abdomen to filter blood and can be done at home. A special dialysis fluid fills the abdomen and absorbs waste before being drained.

Reduce your risk of developing kidney disease by:



Eating a balanced, low-salt diet



Exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy weight



Not smoking



Maintaining healthy blood pressure and blood sugar levels (take your chronic medication only as prescribed by your doctor)



Using all medications responsibly and only as directed, including over-the-counter medication

How the Benefit Society supports members with CKD

The Society covers renal disease, which is listed as a Prescribed Minimum Benefit (PMB) condition for confirmed PMB cases. Pre-authorization from the Society's managed care department is required for this benefit, which is covered at 100% of the Designated Service Provider (DSP) rate both in and out of hospital. To minimise or avoid co-payments, always use a DSP provider.

Being informed is the first step to taking control of your health. If you are at risk of CKD and have not had your kidney function tested, now is a good time. Early detection is key to successfully managing and treating CKD!

NEED HELP? Reach out to the Benefit Society if you have any queries.

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