March is Kidney Disease Awareness Month
Chronic Kidney Disease on the Rise

More than 26 million American adults have chronic kidney disease (CKD) and millions more are at risk and don’t know it. Since kidney disease can sneak up without any warning in the way of symptoms, the disease has been labeled a “silent killer” and a “quiet epidemic.”

1. The incidence of kidney failure, or end stage renal disease (ESRD), is rising fast, with more than 546,000 Americans currently receiving treatment. This includes more than 381,000 dialysis patients and 165,000 people with functioning kidney transplants.

2. Of the more than 110,000 Americans currently awaiting organ transplants, 87,000 are waiting for a kidney.

3. Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, accounting for 44 percent of the new cases. Nearly 215,000 people are living with kidney failure resulting from diabetes.

4. Uncontrolled or poorly controlled high blood pressure is the second leading cause of kidney failure in the country, accounting for 26% of all cases.

5. The third and fourth leading causes of kidney failure in the U.S. are glomerulonephritis, an inflammatory disease of the kidneys, and polycystic kidney disease.

6. CKD hits minorities disproportionately, with African Americans affected at a rate of nearly three times that of Caucasians as the number of new cases of kidney failure per million is 783 for African Americans and 295 for whites. Hispanics, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and the elderly are also at increased risk.

7. Each year, more than 88,000 Americans die from causes related to kidney failure.

8. Premature death from cardiovascular disease is higher in adults with CKD compared to adults without CKD. In fact, individuals with CKD are 16 to 40 times more likely to die than to reach kidney failure.

9. CKD continues to be a major cause of lost productivity, physician visits and hospitalizations among men and women.

For more information contact the national Kidney Foundation of Illinois at 312-321-1500 or visit www.nkfi.org or www.kidneymobile.org.

Sources of Facts and Statistics
United States Renal Data System (www.usrds.org)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)
March is Kidney Disease Awareness Month
Uncontrolled high blood pressure is the second leading cause
of kidney failure in the US.

Severe high blood pressure can harm kidney function over a relatively short period of time. Even mild forms of high blood pressure (HBP) can damage kidneys over several years.

1. Over 74 million Americans age 20 and older have HBP, with less than 78% aware of their condition.

2. The top number in a blood pressure measurement is called the systolic pressure. This measures the force of blood against the walls of the arteries when the heart is pumping. The lower number is called the diastolic pressure. This measures the force of the blood when the heart is between beats. Both numbers are important and need to be controlled.

3. HBP is defined as systolic pressure of 140 or higher or diastolic pressure of 90 or higher. However, people who have blood pressures from 120/80 to 139/89 may be at increased risk for developing high blood pressure and should follow healthy lifestyle modifications such as losing excess weight and exercising regularly. In people with diabetes or chronic kidney disease, blood pressure over 130/80 is considered high.

4. In 90 to 95% of cases, no specific cause is identified for HBP. However, certain individuals have a greater risk of developing high blood pressure: older persons, people with a family history of HBP, people who are overweight and certain groups including African Americans.

5. Within the African American community, those with the highest rates of HBP are more likely to be middle aged or older, less educated, overweight or obese, physically inactive and to have diabetes.

6. Elevated blood pressure usually causes no symptoms. For this reason, it is important to have regular blood pressure screenings.

7. HBP can affect anyone at any age. Regular high blood pressure checkups should begin in childhood and continue throughout life.

8. HBP and chronic kidney disease (CKD) are closely related. HBP is the second leading cause of kidney failure with more than 32,000 cases reported each year.

9. More than 20% of people aged 20 years or older with hypertension have CKD.

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Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure in the U.S.,
accounting for about 44% of new cases.

Current research suggests that control of high blood pressure is a key factor in slowing this disease. Strict control of blood sugar levels and reduction of dietary protein intake are also important. Treatment to prevent diabetic kidney disease should begin early – before kidney damage develops.

1. 24 million people in the U.S. have diabetes. Of these, 18 million are diagnosed and nearly 6 million are undiagnosed.

2. Diabetes is characterized by high levels of blood sugar, resulting from insufficient production of insulin or defects in insulin action in the body. Type 2 diabetes (also called noninsulin-dependent diabetes) is far more common than type 1, accounting for about 90 to 95 percent of the cases of diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is most common in people over 40, but is increasing among younger people including children and adolescents.

3. Diabetes damages small blood vessels throughout the body, affecting the kidneys as well as other organs and tissues including skin, nerves, muscles, intestines and the heart. Patients with diabetes can develop high blood pressure as well as rapid hardening of the arteries, which can also lead to heart disease and eye disorders.

4. Type 2 diabetes is more prevalent in certain ethnic groups. Prevalence of diabetes is 11.8% of non-Hispanic blacks, 10.4% of Hispanics, 7.5% of African Americans and 6.6% of non-Hispanic whites.

5. The risk factors for type 1 diabetes include autoimmune, genetic and environmental factors. Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include older age, obesity, family history of diabetes, prior history of gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy), impaired glucose tolerance, physical inactivity and race or ethnicity.

6. Research suggests high blood pressure may be the most important predictor for diabetics developing chronic kidney disease. Specific high blood pressure medications such as angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and the angiotensin-2 receptor blockers (ARBs) may be the most effective in preventing diabetic kidney disease. About 75% of adults with diabetes have blood pressure greater than 130/80 or use medications for high blood pressure.

7. Some of the signs that diabetics may be developing chronic kidney disease include protein in the urine, high blood pressure, leg swelling or cramps, increased need to urinate (especially at night), abnormal blood tests (glomerular filtration rate, GFR), less need for insulin or anti-diabetic pills, nausea and vomiting, weakness, pallor and anemia, itching and diabetic eye disease.

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8. Treatment for diabetic kidney disease includes controlling blood pressure and blood sugar levels, reducing dietary protein intake, avoiding medications that may damage the kidneys, treating urinary tract infections and exercise and weight loss (under the supervision of a physician).

9. More than 35% of people aged 20 years or older with diabetes have chronic kidney disease.

10. It is estimated that 1 in 3 U.S. adults will have diabetes in the year 2050 compared to 1 in 10 today. *For more information contact the national Kidney Foundation of Illinois at 312-321-1500 or visit [www.nkfi.org](http://www.nkfi.org) or [www.kidneymobile.org](http://www.kidneymobile.org).*

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