



# Health Awareness

## Know The Risk Factors For Early Detection Of Chronic Kidney Disease

(NAPSA)—If you or a loved one has any of the common risk factors for chronic kidney disease (CKD), such as diabetes and high blood pressure, you are not alone. Twenty million Americans (1 in 9 U.S. adults) have CKD, but may not recognize the warning signs until the disease has progressed.

To get the word out about CKD risk factors and the importance of early detection, former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, M.D., the National Kidney Foundation (NKF), Ortho Biotech Products, L.P. and other sponsors are joining forces to educate Americans about kidney disease.

Chronic kidney disease is a progressive condition in which the kidneys are unable to function effectively. Many people do not realize that they have CKD, or are even at risk for developing it, until they have reached advanced stages of the condition.

The most common risk factors for CKD include diabetes, high blood pressure and a family history of kidney disease. If you are over 65, African American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander or Native American, your risk for CKD is also greater.

Due to high rates of diabetes and high blood pressure—the leading cause of kidney disease—African Americans have an increased risk for developing CKD.

“African Americans constitute about 32 percent of all patients treated for kidney failure in the U.S., but make up only about 13



**Former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, M.D.**

percent of the overall U.S. population,” said Dr. Elders. “Anyone with high blood pressure, diabetes or a family history of kidney disease is at risk and should have his or her kidney function tested.”

People can take action by evaluating if they are at risk for CKD and by identifying common signs and symptoms often associated with the condition. Anemia, a low concentration of oxygen-carrying red blood cells, is an often-overlooked warning sign of CKD. It is particularly important for those at risk for CKD to be aware of symptoms of anemia, such as tiredness or weakness, dizziness, or shortness of breath.

In addition to the symptoms of anemia, people should pay attention to other possible warning

signs of CKD, including foamy urine, puffy eyes, and swollen face, hands, abdomen, ankles or feet.

Dr. Elders and the NKF offer the following tips to help detect kidney disease early and prevent kidney failure:

- Find out your family’s health history.
- Visit your doctor for regular checkups (including urine and blood tests).
- Follow your doctor’s instructions to keep hypertension and diabetes in control.
- Keep your weight in check and follow a balanced diet recommended by your doctor.
- Start exercising by walking for 30 minutes at least three times a week. Check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program.
- Limit salt intake to control high blood pressure.
- If you smoke, quit.
- Limit your intake of alcoholic beverages.

The National Kidney Foundation offers convenient, free CKD screenings as part of the Kidney Early Evaluation Program, or KEEP, throughout the year.

To find out more about the National Kidney Foundation’s schedule of KEEP screenings, visit [www.keeponline.org](http://www.keeponline.org). To receive a free “Am I at Risk?” brochure from the NKF, call (800) 622-9010. For information about kidney health, visit [www.kidneyresource.com](http://www.kidneyresource.com).



*Note to Editors: Although March is National Kidney Month, this story can be helpful to your readers at any time.*