

Health Awareness

Why—And How—To ‘Heart’ Your Kidneys, Every Day

(NAPSA)—Many people don’t know it, but when your kidneys stop working, so do you. Your kidneys are as essential to life as other vital organs, such as your heart. Kidney healthy is also heart healthy, so when you “Heart Your Kidneys,” you also show love for your heart. That’s because the No. 1 cause of death in people with kidney disease is heart disease.

The Problem

More than 30 million American adults are estimated to have chronic kidney disease, and most are unaware of it. One in three American adults is at risk for chronic kidney disease. It’s the ninth leading cause of death in the U.S., and growing in prevalence. For many people, dialysis or a transplant is needed just to stay alive.

What To Watch For

Risk factors for kidney disease include diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and a family history of kidney failure. People of African American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian or Pacific Islander descent are at increased risk for developing the disease. African Americans are three times more likely than whites, and Hispanics are nearly 1½ times more likely than non-Hispanics, to develop end-stage renal disease, also known as kidney failure.

The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) urges everyone with risk factors to speak with their doctor about taking the two simple tests, blood and urine, to check for kidney health. And if you don’t have major risk factors for chronic kidney disease, you should still discuss your kidney health with your doctor. Even if you inherit kidney disease, you may be able to slow its progression with lifestyle changes. You can join the conversation on social media and post #HeartYourKidneys. NKF is the largest, most comprehensive and long-standing organization dedicated to the awareness, prevention and treatment of kidney disease.

What To Do About It

On World Kidney Day, March 8, throughout March—National Kidney



Angelica Hale, National Kidney Foundation Kid Ambassador, transplant recipient, and “America’s Got Talent” runner-up.

Month—and at any time of year, NKF says, all Americans should “Heart Your Kidneys” by following some simple tips.

“Eat right, exercise, drink water, and keep your kidneys healthy, because whatever you’re good at, there’s only one you,” says 10-year-old “America’s Got Talent” singer, kidney transplant recipient, and first-ever NKF Kid Ambassador Angelica Hale in a new “Heart Your Kidneys” video public service announcement.

At age 4, Angelica’s kidneys failed. Her mother, Eva Hale, donated one of her own kidneys to her daughter to save her life. Today, both mother and daughter are healthy. Angelica has also become NKF’s newest kidney advocate on Capitol Hill at the Kidney Patient Summit in Washington, D.C., by supporting NKF legislative priorities.

Fast Kidney Facts

- Your kidneys are located in the back just below your rib cage.
- Each of your kidneys is about the size of your fist.
- The kidneys’ major function is to remove waste products and excess fluid from the body.
- Kidney disease usually affects both kidneys.
- Nearly 100,000 people in the U.S. are waiting for a kidney transplant.

Learn More

For more information about kidney health, visit www.kidney.org.