



ADULT

HEALTH BULLETIN



MARCH 2018

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

KEEPING YOUR KIDNEYS HEALTHY



March is "National Kidney Month". However, you can be a kidney health champion any time of the year! The kidneys are two, fist-sized organs in your lower back. They maintain overall health through the following functions:

- Regulate fluid levels
- Filter waste from the blood
- Balance the body's fluids and minerals
- Regulate blood pressure
- Activate vitamin D that promotes strong, healthy bones
- Direct production of red blood cells

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High blood pressure, diabetes, age 60 or older, or a family history of kidney failure can put one in three Americans at an increased risk of developing kidney disease. Kidney disease can cause: nerve damage, cardiovascular disease, weak bones, heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, kidney failure and a low red blood cell count.

Recognize the symptoms of kidney disease:

- Swelling: face, hands, abdomen, ankles, feet
- Blood in urine or foamy urine
- Puffy eyes
- Difficult or painful urination
- Increased thirst
- Fatigue

Here are some ways to practice kidney health habits:

- **Stay hydrated with water.** Daily fluid intake recommendations vary by age, sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding status.
- **Eat healthy foods.** Eat a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, breads, meats and dairy products. Eating too much salt can be bad for your body and your kidneys. Talk with your doctor or a dietitian about what food is right for you.
- **Exercise regularly.** Regular physical activity can stave off weight gain and high blood pressure. Adults should do at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of physical activity each week.
- **Quit smoking.** Smoking can damage blood vessels, which decreases the flow of blood in the kidneys.
- **Drink only in moderation.** Moderate alcohol use for healthy adults means up to one or two drinks a day. Beer: 12 fluid ounces. Wine: 5 fluid ounces.
- **Medications.** Only take medicine a doctor prescribes you. Do not overdo it when taking over-the-counter medications. Common non-prescription pills like ibuprofen can cause kidney damage if taken too regularly over a long period.



RESOURCES:

- <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2015/04/7-secrets-to-keeping-your-kidneys-healthy>
- <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/communication-programs/nkdep/get-involved/national-kidney-month>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/data-statistics/plain-water-the-healthier-choice.html>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/alcohol/art-20044551>
- https://www.kidney.org/news/monthly/Focus_KidneyMonth
- <https://www.kidney.org/atoz/content/sixstepshealthprimer>
- <https://www.kidney.org/atoz/content/making-choices-keep-you-and-your-kidneys-healthy>

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