What African Americans with Diabetes or High Blood Pressure Need to Know

Get Checked for Kidney Disease

MAKE THE Kidney Connection

NKDEP
National Kidney Disease Education Program

If you have diabetes or high blood pressure, you need to get checked for kidney disease.

Why should I be checked for kidney disease?

Diabetes and high blood pressure are common health issues among African Americans. These conditions can damage the kidneys over time and may even cause kidney failure. Here are some other reasons to get checked:

- **Early kidney disease has no signs or symptoms.** The only way to know if you have kidney disease is to get checked for it.
- **Kidney disease often does not go away.** It may get worse over time and can lead to kidney failure. You will need to go on dialysis or have a kidney transplant if your kidneys fail.
- **Kidney disease can be treated.** The sooner you know you have kidney disease, the sooner you can start treatment to help delay or prevent kidney failure. Treating kidney disease also may help prevent heart disease.

You also should be checked for kidney disease if you have:

- Cardiovascular (heart) disease, or
- A mother, father, sister, or brother with kidney failure.

What steps can I take to keep my kidneys healthy?

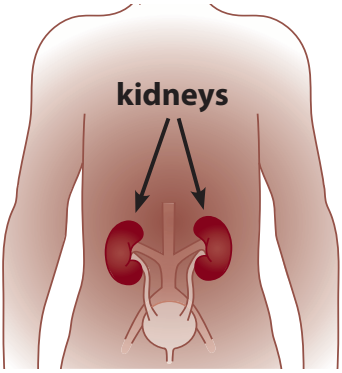
1. Get checked for kidney disease. The sooner you know you have kidney disease, the sooner it can be treated.
2. Manage your diabetes and keep your blood pressure below 130/80.

Here's how:

- Eat healthy
- Cut back on salt
- Be active
- Take medicines as prescribed

Tell others about the Kidney Connection.

Help your family or faith community *Make the Kidney Connection* between diabetes, high blood pressure, and kidney disease. You don't have to be a health expert to talk to them about kidney health and the importance of getting checked. The National Kidney Disease Education Program's easy-to-use tools—the *Family Reunion Health Guide* and *Kidney Sundays Toolkit*—tell you how.
Visit *www.nkdep.nih.gov* to view or order them.



You have two kidneys located near the middle of your back, just under your rib cage. Their main job is to filter wastes and extra water from the blood to make urine. Wastes can build up in the body when the kidneys are damaged.

How will I be checked for kidney disease?

Two tests are used to check for kidney disease:

- A blood test checks your GFR, which tells how well your kidneys are filtering. GFR stands for glomerular filtration rate.
- A urine test checks for albumin. Albumin is a protein that can pass into the urine when the kidneys are damaged.

FACTS:

- Diabetes is the #1 cause of kidney failure among African Americans. High blood pressure is the #2 cause.
- African Americans have a higher rate of kidney failure than any other group of people.

At your next health care visit, make sure:

- **You learn your GFR and the amount of albumin in your urine.** Both should be checked if you have diabetes or high blood pressure.
- **Your blood pressure and blood sugar have been checked and are in your target range.** Your blood pressure should be checked at each visit, and your blood sugar should be checked yearly if you have diabetes. If your levels are too high, work with your health care team to get them in a range that's right for you.

For more information:

National Kidney Disease Education Program
Toll free at 1-866-4 KIDNEY (1-866-454-3639)
www.nkdep.nih.gov

National Diabetes Education Program
Toll free at 1-800-438-5383
www.ndep.nih.gov

National High Blood Pressure Education Program
1-301-592-8573
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/nhbpep

National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse
Toll free at 1-800-891-5390
www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse
Toll free at 1-800-860-8747
www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov

To order this brochure, call 1-866-4 KIDNEY (1-866-454-3639) or visit *www.nkdep.nih.gov/resources*.

Participants in clinical trials can play a more active role in their own health care, gain access to new research treatments before they are widely available, and help others by contributing to medical research. For more information, visit *www.clinicaltrials.gov*.

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NIDDK NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DIABETES AND DIGESTIVE AND KIDNEY DISEASES

NKDEP National Kidney Disease Education Program

The National Kidney Disease Education Program (NKDEP) encourages people to get tested for kidney disease and educates those with kidney disease and their health care providers about treatments that can help delay or prevent kidney failure. NKDEP is a program of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

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