



Improving the health of Durham  
& NC communities since 1989

## Community Health Coalition, Inc.

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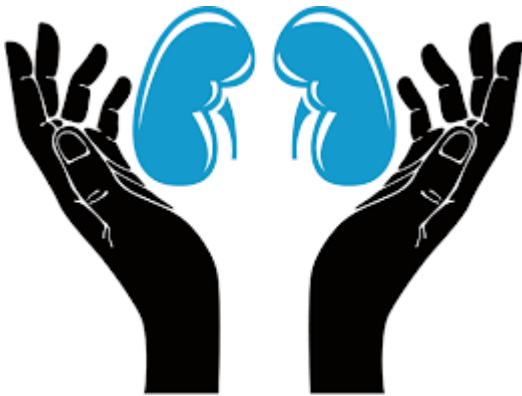
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### **We Can Prevent Kidney Failure**

Kidney disease often has no symptoms until it is very advanced, so it can go unnoticed. Lifestyle changes can make a big difference in reducing one's risk for developing kidney disease and early testing and treatment can slow or prevent the progression of kidney disease and its complications. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention truly is worth a pound of cure.

### **African Americans and kidney disease**

Due to high rates of diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease, African Americans have an increased risk of developing kidney failure. African Americans need to be aware of these risk factors and visit their doctor or clinic regularly to check their blood sugar, blood pressure, urine protein and kidney function.



- African Americans suffer from kidney failure at a significantly higher rate than Caucasians - more than 3 times higher.
- African Americans constitute more than 35% of all patients in the U.S. receiving dialysis for kidney failure, but only represent 13.2% of the overall U.S. population.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure in African Americans. African Americans are twice as likely to be diagnosed with diabetes as Caucasians. Approximately 4.9 million African Americans over 20 years of age are living with either diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetes.
- The most common type of diabetes in African Americans is type 2 diabetes. The risk factors for this type of diabetes include: family history, impaired glucose tolerance, diabetes during pregnancy, hyperinsulinemia and insulin resistance, obesity and physical inactivity. African Americans with diabetes are more likely to develop complications of diabetes and to have greater disability from these complications than Caucasians. African Americans are also more likely to develop serious complications such as heart disease and strokes.
- High blood pressure is the second leading cause of kidney failure among African Americans, and remains the leading cause of death due to its link with heart attacks and strokes.

### **Symptoms of Kidney Disease**

Symptoms of kidney disease may vary for different people but include feeling tired, having less energy, loss of appetite, nausea, difficulty sleeping, shortness of breath, swelling of the legs, itching, and confusion.

According to Dr. Crystal Tyson, a nephrologist and hypertension specialist at Duke University Medical Center, “**The best way to protect your kidneys is to prevent or control high blood pressure and diabetes. Improve your diet by eating less salt and eating more vegetables, fruit, whole grains and nuts. Exercise regularly. Avoid frequent use of pain medications such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), naproxen (Aleve), BC powder and Goody’s powder as these medications can harm the kidneys.**”



Crystal Tyson, MD

## **Kidney Health is in YOUR hands!**



If you have diabetes, take these steps, too:

- Meet blood sugar targets as often as you can.
- Have an A1c test at least twice a year, but ideally up to four times a year. An A1c test measures the average level of blood sugar over the past three months.

## **Kidney Disease Prevention**

- Keep blood pressure below 140/90 mm/Hg, but check with your health care provider for your appropriate target.
- Take your medication as directed
- Lose weight if you're overweight or obese
- Follow a healthy diet
- Lower salt in your diet
- Exercise
- Quit smoking
- Limit alcohol to 1 drink per day if you are a woman and 2 drinks per day if you are a man

## **REMEMBER**

March is also colon cancer awareness month, please remember to eat fiber, try to achieve ideal weight by eating healthy foods and exercising, know your family history, and get a colonoscopy if you are over 50.

## **ABC's of Kidney Disease**

**A**lways the right nutrition, **B**e active and exercise regularly, and **C**heck your blood pressure and aim to keep it below 140/90 mmHg



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Thank you.

**Health Tip** is a message from **Community Health Coalition, Inc.** and is written in partnership with Central Carolina Black Nurses' Council Inc., The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, NC Mutual Life Insurance Company and Duke Regional Hospital.

**REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!**