

Kidney Disease: Quick Facts and Stats

***There is no cure for kidney disease.
So now what?***

- **Care About Your Kidneys** – Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is decreased kidney function for three months or more. End-stage renal disease refers to the end of kidney function (kidneys work at less than 15 per cent of what is considered normal). Without properly functioning kidneys, you could die.

The kidney plays a central role in the human body and is as important to your health as your heart, liver or lungs. Many of the body's organs depend on the kidneys to work properly. The kidneys' main functions are to remove waste products and regulate water in the blood, help control blood pressure, and produce hormones to promote strong, healthy bones.

- **Pervasive & Persistent** – Kidney disease can strike anyone at any age. Two million Canadians are living with kidney disease, or are at risk. Every day, 14 Canadians learn that their kidneys are failing.
- **Core Causes** – The two most common and preventable causes of end-stage kidney disease are diabetes and high blood pressure, but kidney disease can also be caused by an inherited disease such as polycystic kidney disease, infection, or by trauma.
- **Serious Stages** – Kidney disease is divided into five stages. Stage 5 is known as end-stage renal disease -- at that point, patients need dialysis or kidney transplants to stay alive.
 - Stage 1: Slight kidney damage
 - Stage 2: Mild decrease in kidney function
 - Stage 3: Moderate decrease in kidney function
 - Stage 4: Severe decrease in kidney function
 - Stage 5: End-stage renal disease¹
- **Detecting Disease** – Kidney disease is difficult to detect because there are few symptoms. Age and gender, along with a simple blood test, can determine valuable information about one's kidney function.
 - Individuals at risk include:
 - Those who suffer from diabetes or hypertension
 - People over the age of 55
 - Certain ethnic groups such as First Nations, Hispanic, African American, Asian and Pacific Islanders
- **Strong and Silent** – Chronic kidney disease is considered a silent disease. As many as 600,000 Canadians may be at risk and not know it.
 - Signs of the disease can include:
 - Fatigue and weakness
 - Loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting
 - Dizziness and trouble concentrating
 - Headaches, numbness in hands and feet
 - Frequent urination, especially at night

- **Renal Replacement Treatment** – The main treatments for end-stage kidney disease include dialysis or kidney transplants.
 - Dialysis treatments replace some of the lost function of kidneys and must be continued throughout one’s life. There are two types of dialysis: hemodialysis, which cleans the blood through an artificial kidney hooked up to a machine, and peritoneal dialysis, which removes waste products and excess water but cleans the blood inside your body using your peritoneal (abdominal) cavity as a filter.
 - Each year, more than \$2 billion is spent on dialysis in Canada.
 - With advances in kidney transplant methods and improvements in transplant success, a kidney transplant is now widely considered to be the best way of treating end-stage renal disease for many people. But it is not suitable for everyone, and is not a permanent solution. A successful kidney transplant will typically last between 10 – 20 years. Kidney transplants can come from living or deceased people.
 - More than 3,000 Canadians are on a wait list for kidney transplants.

- **Coping with Kidney Disease** – Chronic kidney disease can be devastating if left undiagnosed or untreated leading to an illness with no cure. That’s why prevention and early detection are key.

- Steps can be taken to promote kidney health, such as:
 - Controlling diabetes and hypertension
 - Maintaining a healthy diet and weight
 - Exercising regularly
 - Living smoke-free

- Visit www.kidney.ca to learn more about why kidneys are important, the value of organ donation, and what programs and support are available for people living with kidney disease – and those at risk.

- **The Kidney Foundation of Canada (KFoC)** is the leading Canadian organization committed to kidney health and improved lives for all people living with kidney disease. The KFoC provides programs and services to people with kidney disease and their families – as well as public education.

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