

# March Is Kidney Health Month

## Do you know the ABC's of kidney disease?

About 2 million Canadians have kidney disease, or are at risk

by Dr. Julian Midgley,  
Chair, Medical Advisory Committee,  
The Kidney Foundation of Canada



Dr. Julian Midgley

- Albumin is an essential protein in human blood that helps regulate blood pressure. Albuminuria is a sign that albumin is leaking through the filters in the kidney and into the urine. Albuminuria is one of the early signs of chronic kidney disease.
- High Blood Pressure and Cardiovascular disease are two of the leading causes of kidney failure. Experts estimate that one in five adults has high blood pressure, but as many as one-third of them don't know it, meaning that high blood pressure, a cause of chronic kidney disease, can go undetected and untreated.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of chronic kidney disease and kidney failure. It affects over 1.3 million Canadians above the age of 12. Careful management of diabetes is key to preventing kidney failure.
- Estimated GFR (e-GFR) is the most useful measurement of kidney function available to doctors. It is calculated using age, sex and a blood test (serum creatinine) result to estimate the ability of the kidneys to filter waste products. Chronic kidney disease causes a reduced e-GFR.
- Finding out more at [www.kidney.ca](http://www.kidney.ca) can help you decide whether and when to consult your healthcare practitioner.

- News Canada  
Word Count: 189

## World Kidney Day declares kidneys amazing

By Nellie Lloyd

(NC)—March is Kidney Health Month in Canada and March 13 marks World Kidney Day. This year's theme, announced by the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF), is "Amazing kidneys!". It's designed to elevate this humble organ to its rightful place on the organ roster; and to remind us that the kidney is just as vital to our health as the heart and lungs.

The kidneys are the body's master chemists. They produce hormones that regulate important functions such as blood pressure, the making of red blood cells, and the uptake of calcium from the intestine. Above all, they remove toxins from the blood with remarkable efficiency. Dr. Barbara Ballermann, a professor of medicine and the director of the division of nephrology and immunology at the University of Alberta, comments on the outstanding filtering capacity of the kidneys: "Think

of the gasoline tank of a car. You might have 60 liters in a tank. Well, the kidneys filter over 3 times as much every day. This is a huge rate of filtration. If they get hurt or sick, you end up losing vital protein in the urine and that can be detrimental to life."

Another amazing aspect of the kidneys is that while individuals are typically born with two of these pivotal organs, a person can survive with a single healthy kidney. This means that the kidney is one of the few organs that you can donate while alive and still keep on trucking. In fact, living kidney donation is now more common than transplantation from deceased donors.

Janet Bick is a successful transplant recipient of over 30 years and currently director of government relations with The Kidney Foundation of Canada. Kidney disease was prevalent in her family. Today, she champions early detection and organ donation and the amazing research that makes both

possible. "Research saved my life," she states.

Since its creation in 1964, The Kidney Foundation of Canada has committed over \$80 million to kidney research. Throughout Kidney Health Month, thousands of Foundation volunteer canvassers go door-to-door to raise awareness and funds for renal-related research and programs for people living with kidney disease. "Having healthy kidneys is an amazing gift," says The Kidney Foundation's national president, Niloufer Bhesania, "and World Kidney Day is a great way of promoting the importance of taking care of your kidneys and your overall health. It is also an opportune time to make a monetary donation to assist others or to make a positive decision regarding organ donation and to speak of your wishes with loved ones."

- News Canada  
Word Count: 422



Dr. Ballermann



Janet Bick



Niloufer Bhesania

## Kidney disease is a major health issue

What can you do to detect this silent killer?

By Nellie Lloyd

(NC)—Studies have shown that kidney disease is common, harmful, and often goes undetected by those who have it. The good news is—it's treatable. So, what can you do to detect this silent killer?

First, find out if you are at risk. If you have high blood pressure, diabetes or a family member whose kidneys have failed, you may be at risk. Certain populations (Aboriginal, Asian, South Asian, Pacific Island, African/Caribbean and Hispanic)

and people older than 70 are also more likely to develop kidney disease.

Once you have evaluated your risk level, it is important to seek medical advice and testing. Dr. Michael Copland, past-chair of The Kidney Foundation of Canada's Medical Advisory Committee, says one of the challenges of diagnosing and treating kidney disease is that people experience few symptoms at its earliest and most treatable stage. "People at higher risk for developing kidney disease need to pay close attention to their kidney health," says Dr. Copland. "Regular monitoring of the kidneys, through simple blood and urine tests can show how well the kidneys are functioning. These tests also allow people to gauge their risk for developing kidney failure in the future."

The Kidney Foundation of Canada offers blood pressure and screening clinics in various regions across the country. Consult their website at [www.kidney.ca](http://www.kidney.ca) to identify the activities in your region and download their *Am I at risk?* brochure to find out more about the role you can play in early detection.

- News Canada  
Word Count: 245



**Selling your organs is illegal in Canada.**

**Donating them is not.**

(NC)—The Kidney Foundation of Canada encourages all Canadians to take positive action toward organ donation, and to discuss their wishes with their family.

[www.kidney.ca](http://www.kidney.ca).

- News Canada  
Word Count: 24

**Is there a tax receipt sitting in your driveway?**



The Kidney Car Program is an environmentally friendly fundraising initiative of The Kidney Foundation of Canada. Donated vehicles are towed free of charge and recycled, or resold, and the donor receives a tax receipt. Interested donors may contact the program in their region by calling 1-800-361-7494 or visiting [www.kidney.ca](http://www.kidney.ca)

The Kidney Car Program operates in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.



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- News Canada  
Word Count: 65



**We're behind you all the way.**

An estimated 2 million Canadians have kidney disease, or are at risk, particularly people with high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease. But with few warning signs or symptoms, kidney disease often goes undetected – until it's too late.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is here to help manage, delay and, in some cases, even prevent kidney disease. Through our research funding, programs and services, we've helped turn a once fatal disease into a manageable one.

Today kidney disease is on the rise – and our challenge is greater than ever. So please support us. Because we're behind you all the way.

1-800-361-7494 [www.kidney.ca](http://www.kidney.ca)



The foundation of kidney care.

## Kidney disease can affect anyone.

March is Kidney Health Month. When a volunteer knocks on your door, please give generously. Because we're behind you all the way.

[www.kidney.ca](http://www.kidney.ca)



The foundation of kidney care.

## Kidney Failure – Facing the Facts

by Nellie Lloyd

- Each day, an average of 14 Canadians learns that their kidneys have failed.
- The two leading causes of kidney failure in new patients are: Diabetes (35%) and Renal Vascular Disease (including high blood pressure – 19.5%)
- Over 4,000 Canadians are on the waiting list for a transplant; and more than 3,000 of them need a kidney transplant.
- Over 1000 kidney transplants were performed in 2006: 40% were from living donors.
- Canadians can help those with kidney failure by making a positive decision regarding organ donation, and discussing their wishes with their family.

- News Canada  
Word Count: 97



The foundation of kidney care.

[www.kidney.ca](http://www.kidney.ca)