



The foundation
of kidney care.

News Release

Contact: Irene Aguzzi, Manager, National Public Affairs
514-369-4806, ext. 227

Amazing Kidneys at Risk! Support Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Early Detection and Management

March 11, 2008 - Montreal, Quebec - March 13, 2008 marks the third World Kidney Day (WKD) and falls within Kidney Health Month in Canada. This year's theme, as proclaimed by the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF) is "Amazing Kidneys!". It's a reminder that this humble organ is just as vital to our health as the heart and lungs; and a call to raise awareness of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) which places our amazing kidneys at risk!

"CKD is common, harmful and treatable."

Kidney Disease Improving Global Outcomes position statement available at www.kdigo.org

Canada needs a CKD Early Detection and Management Strategy

Here's why:

- An estimated 2 million Canadians have chronic kidney disease, or are at risk of developing it; and most don't know it.
- Earlier treatment can prevent or delay complications of decreased kidney function and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of death in Canada.
- There is now convincing evidence that CKD can be detected using simple lab tests.

Janet Bick is Director of Policy and Programs at the Ontario Branch of The Kidney Foundation of Canada. Her father and brother were diagnosed with kidney problems in the 1960s, at a time when no treatment options were available to them. By the time she required treatment in the 1970s, transplantation saved her life.

"In less than 50 years we've gone from a place where people with kidney disease died — and that's all there was to it — to a place where Canadians have access to life-saving kidney treatments," says Janet. Now, 30 years later, with a still functioning transplant, she notes: "I think improving early detection and management of chronic disease needs to be increasingly highlighted and addressed."

Know your GFR

Glomerular filtration rate (GFR) is a measurement of the kidney's ability to filter waste products. A low GFR is an indication of reduced kidney function. Estimated GFR is calculated using a formula based on age, gender and the result of a blood test (serum creatinine) to estimate kidney function.

"Estimated GFR is the most useful measurement of kidney function available to doctors," says Dr. Julian Midgley, Chair of the Medical Advisory Committee of The Kidney Foundation of Canada. "People at risk for kidney disease should know their GFR just as people at risk for cardiovascular disease know their blood pressure."

Kidney health is a shared responsibility

"Having healthy kidneys is an amazing gift; but ensuring kidney health is a shared responsibility," stresses Foundation President, Niloufer Bhesania. "That is why the Foundation supports early detection and prevention programs and works with health professionals and associations to educate the public about the significance of monitoring kidney health."

World Kidney Day is a joint initiative of the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF) and the International Society of Nephrology (ISN). The IFKF fosters international collaboration and exchange of ideas to improve the health, well being and quality of life of individuals with kidney disease. The ISN aspires towards the elimination of kidney disease worldwide and promotes the global advancement of nephrology. The Canadian Society of Nephrology is the national society of physicians and scientists specializing in the care of people with kidney disease, and in research related to the kidney and kidney disease.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is the national volunteer organization committed to reducing the burden of kidney disease through funding and stimulating innovative research; providing education and support; promoting access to high quality healthcare, and increasing public awareness and commitment to advancing kidney health and organ donation.

- 30 -

To find out more about Chronic Kidney Disease awareness activities in your local community, or in the global community, for World Kidney Day 2008, visit www.worldkidneyday.org or www.kidney.ca or contact:

Northern Alberta (Edmonton) – Barbara Foxall - (780) 451-6900
Southern Alberta (Calgary) - Jodi Currie (403) 255-6108 ext. 35 or 1-800-268-1177
British Columbia - Pauline Buck - (604) 736-9775
Manitoba - Val Dunphy - (204) 989-0804
New Brunswick – Anne Henderson - (506) 328-9173
Newfoundland – Theresa Horvath - (709) 753-8999
Nova Scotia - Michelle McCann – (902) 429-0906 or Toll Free 1-800-889-5557, ext. 4
Ontario (Toronto) - Wendy Kudeba - (416) 445-0373, ext. 242
Prince Edward Island – Joe McCabe - (902) 892-9009
Quebec – Caroline Duguay - (514) 938-5518, ext. 225
Saskatchewan – Sheri H Smith - (306) 664-8588, ext. 22

National Public Affairs – 514-369-4806, ext. 227 or 1-800-361-7494

CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE BACKGROUNDER

What do kidneys do?

- They produce hormones that regulate important functions such as blood pressure
- They also regulate the levels of water and minerals in the body.
- Most importantly, they remove waste products from the blood: without properly functioning kidneys, a person can die within days.

What is chronic kidney disease (CKD)?

- CKD is the presence of kidney damage, or a decreased level of kidney function, for a period of three months or more.
- It can be divided into five stages, depending on the severity of the damage to the kidneys or the level of decrease in kidney function.
- The fifth or final stage of kidney disease is known as End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) and refers to the 'end' of kidney function, when kidneys are working to less than 15% of their normal function. To sustain life at this stage, dialysis or kidney transplantation is required.

What are the warning Signs of CKD?

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Puffiness of the eyes, hands and feet
- Bloody, cloudy or tea-coloured urine
- Presence of protein in the urine
- Excessive foaming of the urine
- Frequent urination during the night
- Fatigue, difficulty concentrating
- Loss of appetite or weight
- Persistent generalized itching

Who is at risk?

- Persons with diabetes
- Persons with high blood pressure
- Persons with a family member whose kidneys have failed
- Certain populations, notably Aboriginal, Asian, South Asian, Pacific Island, African/Caribbean and Hispanic

If you belong to one of the above risk groups, The Kidney Foundation of Canada encourages you to:

- Discuss your blood pressure target with your doctor who will recommend therapies and dietary and lifestyle changes to help you achieve your goal.
- Keep blood sugar as close to normal as possible - you will minimize your chances of developing diabetic kidney disease.
- Ask your doctor about a lab test known as *estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR)*. This test is widely seen as the most effective way to detect kidney disease in its earliest stages - when it is more treatable.
- Be sure to get tested regularly. This will help you and your doctor to monitor your kidney function, which may change over time.
- Continue to manage your blood sugar and high blood pressure carefully, even if your kidneys are healthy or if your loss of kidney function is non-progressive.