

Kidney Health Sunday

March 4, 2012



What is Kidney Health Sunday?

Kidney Health Sunday is a national faith day to raise awareness and charitable giving, within churches, for kidney disease. As a national partner of the American Kidney Fund (AKF), the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education encourages our member churches and their health ministries to conduct kidney disease awareness and education activities on Kidney Health Sunday.

To help you set up programs in your churches, AKF offers a free kidney disease prevention toolkit and instructional webinars. Please see the information attached for more details.

Facts about Kidney Disease in the United States

Source: American Kidney Fund

Kidney disease is a common, but preventable condition that is damaging the health of as many as 31 million Americans. Because kidney disease has few warning signs in the early stages, nine out of 10 people with early kidney disease don't know they have it.

Kidney disease is most often caused by diabetes and high blood pressure, and it can lead to heart attack, stroke, kidney failure and death. Managing diabetes and high blood pressure can help to prevent kidney disease. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle through simple steps, like being physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, eating a healthy diet and getting tested for kidney disease, can also help.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do the kidneys do?

Your kidneys clean waste and extra fluid from your blood. This makes up your urine. They also do many other jobs that you need in order to live. Your kidneys help to:

- Control chemicals in your body
- Control your blood pressure
- Keep your bones healthy
- Make red blood cells

2. What is kidney disease?

Kidney disease is lasting damage to the kidneys that can get worse over time. If the damage is very bad, your kidneys may stop working. If this happens, you will need dialysis or a transplant in order to live.

3. What causes kidney disease?

Kidney disease can be caused by many things. **The most common causes of kidney disease are diabetes and high blood pressure.** Some infections, inherited diseases and injuries can also cause kidney disease.

4. Who is at risk for kidney disease?

Anyone can develop kidney disease, but some people are more at risk. You may be at risk if you:

- Have diabetes
- Have high blood pressure
- Have a family member with kidney disease
- Are African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American
- Are over 60 years old
- Have heart disease

5. What are the signs of kidney disease?

Kidney disease often has no symptoms. Testing is the only way to know how well your kidneys are working. If you're at risk, ask your doctor about the following tests:

- **eGFR** (estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate)
 - This test tells your doctor how well your kidneys clean your blood.
 - Your doctor tests your blood for a kind of waste called creatinine. Healthy kidneys filter creatinine out of your blood. Your doctor will then use your creatinine test result to figure out your eGFR.
 - An eGFR less than 60 for three months or more may be a sign of kidney disease.
- **Urine Test**
 - This test tells your doctor if there is protein or blood in your urine.
 - Your doctor may test your urine in the office or ask you to collect your urine at home.
 - Protein (called albumin) or blood in your urine may be a sign of kidney disease.
- **Blood Pressure**
 - This test tells your doctor how hard your heart is working to pump your blood.
 - High blood pressure can cause kidney disease, but kidney disease can also cause you to have high blood pressure.

- For most people, a normal blood pressure is less than 120/80 (120 over 80). Ask your doctor what your blood pressure should be.

6. What can I do to prevent kidney disease?

To help keep your kidneys healthy:

- Talk to your doctor about your risk for kidney disease
- Eat a heart-healthy diet (low in salt and fat)
- Exercise most days of the week to keep a healthy weight
- See your doctor at least once a year
- Treat high blood pressure and diabetes if you have them

7. What if I already have kidney disease?

If your doctor tells you that you have kidney disease:

- Keep your blood pressure less than 130/80
- Control your blood sugar if you have diabetes
- Eat a heart-healthy diet (low in salt and fat) and ask your doctor for more diet information
- Exercise most days of the week to keep a healthy weight
- Do not smoke or use tobacco
- Ask your doctor about medicines that might help

If you find and treat kidney disease early, you may be able to slow it down!

8. Where can I get more information?

To learn more about kidney disease and how to keep your kidneys healthy, please visit the American Kidney Fund at KidneyFund.org, or call our toll-free HelpLine at 866.300.2900.

What Can I Do to Help?

You can:

- Set up a Kidney Health Sunday at your church, with activities to raise awareness about kidney disease and its risk factors
- Use the American Kidney Fund's [Learn it! Check it! Live it! Toolkit](#) to educate those in your community about kidney disease
- Conduct risk factor screenings, such as blood pressure checks, and encourage those at risk to seek further testing

- [Contribute](#) to support the American Kidney Fund in the fight against kidney disease
- Join the American Kidney Fund's [Advocacy Network](#) to help make a difference for kidney patients

For more information, go to KidneyFund.org.