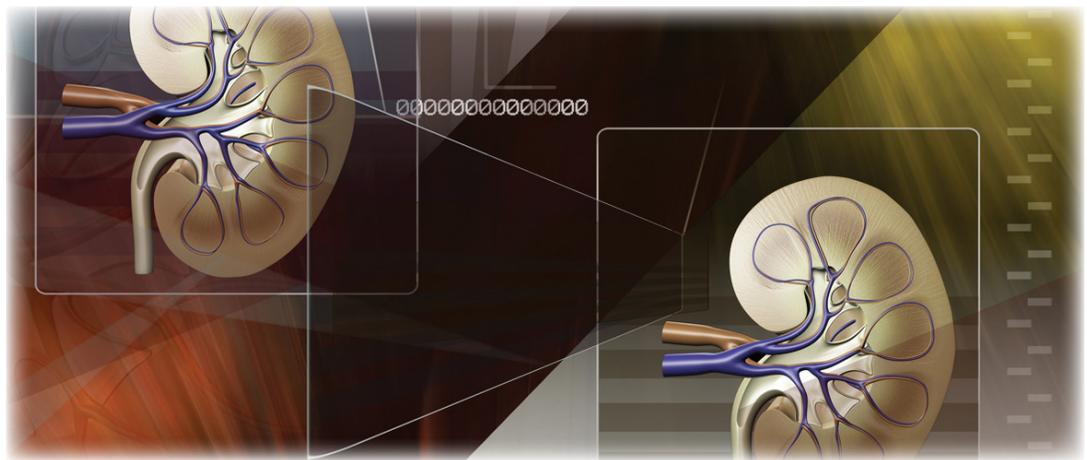


## National Kidney Health Awareness

**M**ost people know that a major function of the kidneys is to remove waste products and excess fluid from the body. These waste products and excess fluid are removed through the urine. The production of urine involves highly complex steps of excretion and re-absorption. This process is necessary to maintain a stable balance of body chemicals.

The critical regulation of the body's salt, potassium and acid content is performed by the kidneys. The kidneys also produce hormones that affect the function of other organs. For example, a hormone produced by the kidneys stimulates red blood cell production. Other hormones produced by the kidneys help regulate blood pressure and control calcium metabolism.



The kidneys are powerful chemical factories that perform the following functions:

- remove waste products from the body
- remove drugs from the body
- balance the body's fluids
- release hormones that regulate blood pressure
- produce an active form of vitamin D that promotes strong, healthy bones
- control the production of red blood cells

There are two kidneys, each about the size of a fist, located on either side of the spine at the lowest level of the rib cage.

The kidneys perform their life-sustaining job of filtering and returning to the bloodstream about 200 quarts of fluid every 24 hours. About two quarts are removed from the body in the form of urine,

and about 198 quarts are recovered. The urine we excrete has been stored in the bladder for anywhere from 1 to 8 hours.

### Chronic Kidney Disease Causes

Chronic kidney disease is defined as having some type of kidney abnormality, or "marker", such as protein in the urine and having decreased kidney function for three months or longer.

There are many causes of chronic kidney disease. The kidneys may be affected by diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Some kidney conditions are inherited (run in families).

Others are congenital; that is, individuals may be born with an abnormality that can affect their kidneys. The following are some of the most common types and causes

*(Over)*

## Heart Health Awareness

(Continued)

of kidney damage.

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Glomerulonephritis
- Polycystic kidney disease
- Kidney stones
- Urinary tract infections

### How is Chronic Kidney Disease Detected?

Early detection and treatment of chronic kidney disease are the keys to keeping kidney disease from progressing to kidney failure. Some simple tests can be done to detect early kidney disease. They are:

1. Blood pressure measurement
2. A test for protein in the urine. An excess amount of protein in your urine may mean your kidney's filtering units have been damaged by disease. One positive result could be due to fe-

ver or heavy exercise, so your doctor will want to confirm your test over several weeks.

3. A test for blood creatinine. Your doctor should use your results, along with your age, race, gender and other factors, to calculate your glomerular filtration rate (GFR). Your GFR tells how much kidney function you have. To access the GFR calculator, click here.

### Can Kidney Disease Be Successfully Treated?

Many kidney diseases can be treated successfully. Careful control of diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure can help prevent kidney disease or keep it from getting worse. Kidney stones and urinary tract infections can usually be treated successfully. Unfortunately, the exact causes of some kidney diseases are still unknown, and specific treatments are not yet available for them. Sometimes, chronic kidney disease may progress to kidney failure,

requiring dialysis or kidney transplantation. A great deal of research is being done to find more effective treatment for all conditions that can cause chronic kidney disease.

### People With Increased Risk for Chronic Kidney Disease

You may have an increased risk for kidney disease if you:

- are older
- have diabetes
- have high blood pressure
- have a family member who has chronic kidney disease
- are an African American, Hispanic American, Asians and Pacific Islander or American Indian.

If you are in one of these groups or think you may have an increased risk for kidney disease, ask your doctor about getting tested.

*kidney.org*

## Benefits Corner

### Reminder:

Certain FDA approved prescription drugs and many over the counter (OTC) products to help you quit smoking and it won't cost you anything!

**Prescription Drugs:** Chantix, Bupropion, Burpropion SR (generic Zyban)

OTC Nicotine Replacement Therapy Products; For a list of the Brand name and generic OTC Nicotine Replacement Therapy Products that are covered at 100% call the Anthem Customer Service number on back of your ID Card (1-866-698-0087)

As a reminder, these benefits are only available to covered participants over the age of 18 and at an in network provider/pharmacy.

Get even more support at [anthem.com](http://anthem.com) Log on and click on our Health and Wellness section for resources, videos and even an online community for information and inspiration to quit!

If you have any issues with contacting Anthem Customer Service or would like a brochure about the Smoking Cessation Benefit, please contact your CHP Benefit Administrator at 303-861-0507