



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Kidney Health

National Kidney Month — March 2012

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Kendrick] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Dr. Juliette Kendrick, filling in for your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Kidneys are the body's cleansing system. When they aren't functioning properly, waste builds up which can lead to severe health problems.

Nilka Rios Burrows is a researcher with CDC's Division of Diabetes Translation. She's joining us today to discuss the dangers of kidney disease. Welcome to the show, Nilka.

[Nilka Burrows] Thank you.

[Dr. Kendrick] Nilka, how common is kidney disease?

[Nilka Burrows] More than 10 percent, or more than 20 million, US adults are estimated to have kidney disease. Yet, most people with kidney disease, including those with severe disease, are not aware of their condition.

[Dr. Kendrick] Is it more common in any particular group?

[Nilka Burrows] Kidney disease can occur at any age, but it is diagnosed more frequently in people over age 60. In addition to older age, diabetes and high blood pressure are the major risk factors for kidney disease.

[Dr. Kendrick] What are the symptoms of kidney disease?

[Nilka Burrows] At advanced stages of the disease, when kidneys fail, people may feel tired all the time or they may have swelling because of the fluids accumulating in their bodies. However, at early stages, people with kidney disease tend *not* to have symptoms. That's why it's very important, if you have diabetes or high blood pressure or a relative with kidney disease or kidney failure, to talk to your doctor about getting tested for kidney disease. Simple blood and urine tests are used to diagnose kidney disease, and with early detection and treatment, you can slow down the progression of the disease.

[Dr. Kendrick] How is kidney disease treated?

[Nilka Burrows] To treat kidney disease, you treat the risk factors. If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar levels under control. If you have high blood pressure, keep your

blood pressure under control. Also, you might need to modify your diet. For example, lower your salt. Be sure to talk to your doctor about managing diabetes and high blood pressure to help prevent or delay kidney failure.

[Dr. Kendrick] What happens if kidney disease isn't treated?

[Nilka Burrows] If left untreated, kidney disease often gets worse and can progress to kidney failure. Each year, more than 100,000 people in the US begin dialysis for kidney failure.

[Dr. Kendrick] What can we do to *prevent* kidney disease?

[Nilka Burrows] You can protect your kidneys by controlling diabetes and high blood pressure. Lifestyle changes to increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and promote weight loss can help manage, or even prevent, these conditions.

[Dr. Kendrick] Where can listeners get more information about kidney disease?

[Nilka Burrows] For more information, go to www.cdc.gov and type 'kidney' in the search box.

[Dr. Kendrick] Thanks, Nilka. I've been talking today with CDC's Nilka Rios Burrows about the dangers of kidney disease.

Major risk factors include diabetes and high blood pressure; getting them under control can help prevent kidney disease. Talk to your health care provider to find out if *you* need to be tested for kidney disease.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Juliette Kendrick for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.