

Understanding chronic kidney disease

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CHRONIC Kidney Disease or CKD is one of the leading causes of death in the Philippines. According to the National Kidney Transplant Institute (NKTII), one Filipino develops chronic renal failure every hour, that is estimated to be at least 2.3 million Filipinos currently diagnosed with CKD. Meanwhile, other recent projections show that 1 in 10 Filipinos will develop this deadly disease.

CKD is a condition where the kidney's functions have gradually decreased over a period of time, AND IT CAN NO LONGER FILTER BLOOD as properly as before. As a result, EXCESS WASTE AND LIQUID REMAINS IN the body and causes other health problems such as heart disease and stroke.

"The problem with this is that it has no early signs. Symptoms will only show when your kidneys have deteriorated already," shared Dr. Greta Cortez, Head of Medicine, Boehringer Ingelheim (Philippines), Inc.

"Fortunately, there are a number of ways we can keep our kidneys healthy and prevent CKD such as early screening, lifestyle checks, and understanding your family's medical history."

There is a simple two-step screening process to check kidney health. First is the estimated GLOMERULAR FILTRATION RATE (eGFR) A blood test that measures the waste called creatinine in your blood. Second is the urine albumin-creatinine ratio (uACR) test that uses a urine sample to measure albumin, or protein level present in your urine.

The two primary conditions that often lead to CKD are diabetes and hypertension.

Lifestyle factors such as age, smoking, family history of CKD, and obesity also put individuals at risk of CKD. Unhealthy lifestyles are also considered because they might lead to consuming foods high in sugar and sodium, being exposed to constant stress, or hindering movement of the body.

It is highly recommended to ensure sufficient exercise every day, even if it's just walking. Consume foods lower in sugar and salt and increase intake of fruits and vegetables. Remember to incorporate healthy stress management habits into one's lifestyle, such as regular exercise, a healthy diet, and adequate sleep, to prevent high blood pressure or diabetes. By starting to incorporate these healthy habits into daily life, CKD can become the least of concerns.

"Cultivating a healthy lifestyle within your community is key to maintaining them. We can hold each other accountable," shared Reynaldo Abacan Jr., founder and president of Dialysis PH, a support organization for renal failure patients and their families.

"We encourage everyone to check their kidney health as chronic kidney disease is a lifelong condition that affects the quality of life, not just of the patient but of their loved ones as well."

Remember, getting kidneys checked is the most straightforward way to find out if kidneys are healthy. Reach out to a doctor as soon as possible and ensure loved ones do too.