

- Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

What our kidneys need

Eight ways to prevent having chronic kidney disease

Manila Standard · 2 May 2024 · C3 · By Angelica Villanueva Eat lots of fruits and vegetables Do not smoke Keep a healthy weight Be active and fit Monitor your blood pressure Drink enough water daily Consult your doctor for CKD screening Do not take over-the-counter pills regularly

A 2021 report by the International Diabetes Federation, indicated that 4.3 million Filipino adults are suffering from diabetes, which is one of the main causes of chronic kidney disease (CKD).



CKD is a serious condition where kidneys become progressively damaged and lose their ability to effectively filter waste products and excess fluid from your blood.

Adding to this information, studies estimated that around 33 percent of adults with diabetes develop CKD. This translates to an estimated 1.43 million Filipinos with CKD caused by diabetes. Moreover, the National Kidney and Transplant Institute also reported that approximately one Filipino develops chronic renal failure every hour, leading to an estimated seven million Filipinos suffering from CKD.

In a recent press conference held by German pharmaceutical company Bayer, experts addressed this issue and shared ways to prevent yourself from having chronic kidney disease.

Bayer Philippines Inc.'s Country Medical Director Dr. May Pagunsan presented what they called eight golden rules that people can follow to have a healthy kidney.

One of the best ways to remain healthy is to have a regular intake of fruits and vegetables that promote overall health. As for our kidneys, it is advised to take fruits and veggies rich with essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

Smoking harms blood vessels throughout our body, including those in our kidneys. This hinders its ability to filter waste effectively. Quitting allows for better blood flow, enabling kidneys to function more efficiently.

Being overweight or obese is a major risk factor for CKD. Losing and maintaining a healthy weight through a balanced diet and regular exercise is key to keeping the kidneys functioning optimally.

Physical activity helps manage blood pressure and blood sugar, both crucial for kidney health. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise most days of the week. This will help to manage blood pressure and

weight, reducing the risk of CKD.

Managing your blood sugar, blood pressure, and even cholesterol levels could prevent you from the risk of developing kidney disease.

Staying hydrated throughout the day helps the kidneys to function effectively and will help to eliminate waste products. Aim for around eight glasses of water daily.

Certain factors like a family history of kidney disease, diabetes, or high blood pressure increase your risk.

“If you have diabetes, high blood pressure or hypertension, overweight, obese, or have any family history of kidney diseases, then you need to be more aggressive. Consult your doctor and ask, to demand a screening for chronic kidney disease,” Dr. Pagunsan advised.

During her talk, Dr. Pagunsan emphasized the risk of taking over-the-counter pills such as antiinflammatory drugs or pain relievers, mefenamic acids, and ibuprofen, regularly that could harm our kidneys, as there are kinds of medicines that are toxic to our body organs.

“We take them when we have a headache, a muscle ache, toothache—any kind of body ache and pain—but you cannot take them in perpetuity. You can only take them when the acute pain indication is there and no more than seven days,” the expert said.

She also pointed out to be careful in taking food supplements that are mostly available online as you may not know its ingredients that can affect your kidneys.

“So, these are dangerous, particularly if they are just sold on online platforms and not registered with the FDA. We do not know their toxicity effects on the kidneys, on the liver, and even the heart,” she added.

She then mentioned that in case that CDK is already present, it is better to take medicine that can slow down the progression of the disease.

This is where Bayer enters as it recently launched its new therapy for CKD, Finerenone (Firalta), aiming to prevent inflammation and fibrosis in the kidneys which can lead to kidney failure.

With the approval of the Bureau of Food and Drug Administration, Firalta is available at Mercury Drugstore branches for P96 per tablet, with a recommended dosage of 10mg per day.