Kidney Disease Basics

Today, more than 678,000 Americans are living with end-stage renal disease (ESRD), a medical condition where your kidneys stop working. The kidneys filter waste from the blood, balance fluids and minerals, help control blood pressure, keep bones healthy and more. When the kidneys stop working, ESRD patients need dialysis or a transplant to do the vital work of the kidneys. Due to the limited number of kidneys available for transplantation, the vast majority of ESRD patients must depend on dialysis until an organ becomes available.

About 5% more Americans are diagnosed with ESRD each year. This is attributable to many factors, including increasing rates of diabetes and hypertension, which can both lead to chronic kidney disease and later ESRD. Other risk factors include a family history of kidney disease and obesity. Overall rates of ESRD diagnoses are likely to continue to increase, as an estimated 14.8% of people in the United States have chronic kidney disease (CKD) and are at risk for kidney failure.1

Sadly, in the United States, the prevalence of both CKD and ESRD among communities of color is disproportionately high. For example, African Americans are three times more likely to experience kidney failure than Caucasians.2 This can be attributed in large part to diabetes, which can cause ESRD, and is 60% more common in African Americans than in Caucasians.3 In addition, research has shown that kidney disease in African Americans often goes untreated until it reaches the later stages because of a lack of education among patients and clinicians about the population’s increased risk.4 Further, the ESRD incidence rate in Hispanics has remained about 35% higher than non-Hispanics since 2014.5 Given its commitment to eliminating health disparities, the NAACP is collaborating with the Alliance for Home Dialysis and Baxter International Inc. to increase African Americans’ awareness of kidney disease prevention and access to home dialysis services.

Where Can I Go for More Information?

ILLINOIS

American Association of Kidney Patients
- Phone: 1-800-749-AAKP
- Email: info@aakp.org
- Website: www.aakp.org

National Kidney Foundation of Illinois:
- Phone: 312-321-1500
- Email: kidney@nkfi.org
- Website: http://www.nkfi.org/

These organizations can help you find healthcare providers, like nephrologists; connect you with patient and caregiver support groups; assist with insurance issues; and much more.

3https://www.urld.org/2013/news/1.27.aspx
7https://www.panj.com/products/SAO-16-120
8http://www.mckinley.org/home/index_congress品德/213422_congress_can_improve_healthcare_for_Hispanic_dialysis_patients.pdf