

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about Chronic Kidney Disease

The kidneys play the vital role of removing wastes and fluids from the body through the urine. Not only are the kidneys responsible for urine formation, but also the regulation of acid, sodium, and potassium in the body, as well as the production of hormones that stimulate the production of red blood cells, and the control of blood pressure.

Approximately 31 million people in the United States have chronic kidney disease (CKD). Chronic kidney disease is characterized as lasting damage to the kidneys that may worsen over time. Usually there will be a marker or sign that there is a problem in the kidneys, such as protein or blood in the urine. Chronic kidney disease may cause the kidneys to stop working, which is known as kidney failure or end-stage renal disease. If the kidneys do fail, dialysis or a kidney transplant is necessary in order to survive.

Various factors contribute to a person's risk for developing chronic kidney disease. While anyone can develop chronic kidney disease, some groups are at a greater risk than others. Diabetes and high blood pressure are the primary causes of chronic kidney disease. Ethnicity and age also affect the risk for developing chronic kidney disease. African-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asians are at a higher risk for chronic kidney disease. Patients over the age of 60 are also more likely to develop chronic kidney disease. Other causes of kidney damage include heart disease, a family member with kidney disease, polycystic kidney disease, kidney stones, urinary tract infections, congenital kidney diseases, drugs, and toxins.

Unfortunately, chronic kidney disease does not display symptoms until it is far along. The best way to determine the status of the kidneys and detect kidney disease is to take a few simple tests.

eGFR (estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate)

- This test shows how well the kidneys clean the blood.
- An eGFR less than 60 for more than 3 months could be a sign of kidney disease.

Urine Test

- This test shows if there is any blood or protein in the urine.
- Protein or blood in the urine can be a sign of kidney disease.

Blood Pressure

- This test shows how hard the heart works to pump blood.
- High blood pressure leads to kidney disease, but kidney disease can also lead to high blood pressure.
- Normal blood pressure should be around 120/80 mmHg.

Chronic kidney disease usually leads to permanent kidney damage. Despite permanent damage, there are steps that can be taken to slow the progression of chronic kidney disease. Some of these steps include: controlling blood sugar and diabetes, maintaining a healthy blood pressure, eating a heart healthy diet, exercising, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting alcohol consumption, no smoking or using tobacco, and talking to a doctor about medicines that may help protect the kidneys. Following these lifestyle modifications can help control chronic kidney disease. If you belong to one of the high risk groups for chronic kidney disease, suspect kidney damage, or simply want to know the status of your kidneys, ask your doctor about getting tested.

Resources:

www.kidney.org

www.kidneyfund.org

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The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at www.louisianapharmacists.com.

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