

BBQ for kidney health

The Health Column

Jan
2016

Did you know it is possible for a person to lose up to 90% of their kidney function before experiencing any symptoms of kidney disease?

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a growing public health problem. Approximately 1 in 10 Australians over 18 years have evidence of CKD. In CKD, the kidneys slowly stop working over a period of months or years. The kidneys have many important functions in the body, including filtering the blood and producing urine to remove excess fluid and waste from the body. The kidneys also produce several hormones that are important for heart, blood and bone health. People with CKD are at increased risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and death, as well as anaemia and bone disease.



Typically, CKD has no symptoms, and despite affecting 1 in 10, many people are not even aware that they have kidney problems. One-third of Australians are at increased risk of developing CKD. You may be at increased risk of developing CKD if you:

- have diabetes
- have high blood pressure (hypertension)
- have established heart problems (heart failure or heart attack) and/or have had a stroke
- have a family history of kidney disease
- are obese (BMI >30)
- are a smoker
- are 60 years or older
- are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin

If you are worried about your kidney health you should speak to your doctor. Symptoms indicative of kidney health concerns may include (but not be limited to):

- a change in the frequency and quantity of urine passed, especially at night (usually an increase at first)
- blood in the urine (haematuria)
- foaming urine
- puffiness around the eyes and ankles (oedema)
- pain in the back (under the lower ribs, where the kidneys are located)
- pain or burning when passing urine

Your doctor may order tests to diagnose kidney disease, determine the degree of damage, and identify treatment options. Early detection of kidney disease is important. When detected early, medicines can be used to manage CKD to prevent/stop progression, and kidney damage getting worse. Patients with severe CKD, or kidney failure, need dialysis treatment to filter their blood (a key function of the kidneys), or a kidney transplant.

Your local pharmacy can help too. Many pharmacies offer professional services to help you control your diabetes or blood pressure, reduce your weight, or stop smoking. Managing these conditions will improve your kidney health and reduce your risk of developing CKD. Many medicines, including commonly used medicines for pain, can affect kidney health too. Pharmacists are medicines experts – if you have kidney problems or are at increased risk of CKD, pharmacists can provide advice on medicines you should avoid, and medicines which are excreted by the kidneys ('renally cleared').

The Big Red BBQ is held every year on Australia Day to raise awareness of kidney disease and support kidney health promotion. So, why not do what we do best on Australia Day by hosting a Big Red BBQ while making a difference to Australians affected by kidney disease? To register to host a Big Red BBQ in 2016, visit www.kidney.org.au/connect/events/big-red-bbq-external

For more details you can get an informative Fact Cards titled *High blood pressure* and *Staying a non-smoker* from pharmacies that provide the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's (PSA) Self Care health information.

For the nearest Self Care pharmacy location phone the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia on 1300 369 772, or go to www.psa.org.au 'Supporting practice' then 'Self Care', and then 'Find a Self Care pharmacy'.