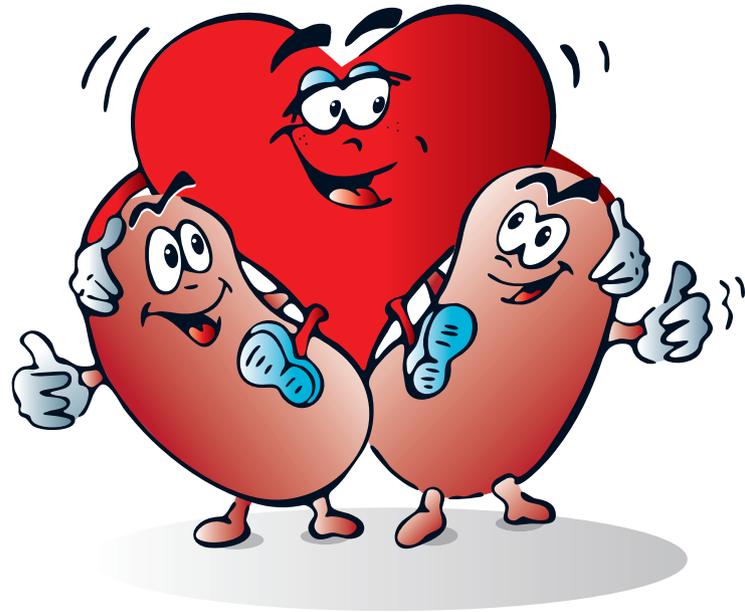




**Amazing Kidneys!**

**Protect your kidneys,  
Save your heart!**



## WHAT DO MY KIDNEYS DO FOR ME?

Your kidneys act as intelligent filters: their main functions are to clean toxins and wastes out of your blood, to maintain body fluid volume and composition, and to secrete hormones which help red blood cell production. Because of this, your kidneys play a central role in regulating blood pressure and balancing important electrolytes which maintain your heart's rhythm.

### **Did you know?**

Your kidneys receive 1000-1200ml of blood per minute, which is an enormous amount compared to their small size: this represents about 20% of your blood volume, although they represent only about 0.5% of your body weight!

## WHAT HAPPENS IF MY KIDNEYS STOP FUNCTIONING?

If your kidneys stop functioning normally, wastes will accumulate and intoxicate the body. This is known as Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). CKD is identified by a progressive loss in renal function over a period of months or years. People with late-stage kidney disease will need dialysis or transplantation to replace the kidneys' blood-cleaning function.

## IS CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE VERY COMMON?

Unfortunately, it is becoming common. In urbanized countries where unhealthy eating habits, increased body fat and sedentary lifestyle have become the norm, chronic kidney disease has risen in prevalence. As an example, in the United States over the last ten years we've seen a 30% increase: now nearly 1 in 7 people has kidney disease!

## WHY DOES KIDNEY DISEASE INCREASE THE RISK OF HEART DISEASE?

If you have kidney disease, you have a three times higher risk of heart disease and premature death. Many people are unaware that kidney dysfunction greatly increases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, which can lead to an event such as a heart attack or stroke.

When your kidneys don't work properly, waste products build up in your blood, and your body's hormones are disturbed. Those changes can affect how your heart and blood vessels work. The kidneys help

to maintain your body's chemical balance which in turn plays an important role in maintaining healthy blood pressure.

If your kidneys aren't working properly your blood pressure can rise. If high blood pressure is left unchecked, it tends to thicken the blood vessel walls causing blood vessels to narrow. Severe, uncontrolled blood pressure weakens the heart and eventually causes kidney failure.

### **Did you know?**

Many people with chronic kidney disease suffer a heart attack or a stroke before they even know that they have kidney disease!

## WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE MY RISK OF BOTH KIDNEY DISEASE AND HEART DISEASE?

Healthy lifestyle choices can help to improve your overall health and thereby lower your risk of kidney disease and heart disease. The following healthy lifestyle choices are a great way to start:

- Don't smoke! If you smoke, quitting now is the most important step you can take for your heart health!
- Maintain a healthy blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels
- Maintain a healthy weight. Check with your doctor to learn more about body mass index and to find out what's right for you
- Eat a healthy diet. Avoid saturated fats and excess salt
- Drink plenty of water and fluids to keep hydrated, but only drink alcohol in moderation
- Try to get 30 mins of exercise, 4 to 5 times a week. Just a half-hour of walking each day will make a big difference!

## WHAT ELSE CAN I DO IF I'M AT RISK?

Early detection is the safest bet! We now know that kidney dysfunction is a risk factor for heart disease, and that heart disease is a risk factor for kidney dysfunction, so if you think you have one of these, it's very important that you get tested for **both**!

The good news is that with early detection and treatment, kidney disease can be slowed down before it progresses to kidney failure. And likewise with heart disease, with early detection, the risk factors which could lead to heart failure can also be monitored and reduced.

If think you are at risk, **please see your doctor** to discuss how to **Protect your kidneys and save your heart!**