



## Facts about High Blood Pressure and Chronic Kidney Disease

- Uncontrolled high blood pressure is the second-leading cause of kidney failure in the United States. (Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure in the U.S.)
- Kidney failure means that the kidneys are no longer able to remove waste products and excess water from the body. Dialysis or a kidney transplant is necessary to maintain life.
- Severe high blood pressure causes kidney damage over a relatively short period of time. Even mild forms of high blood pressure can damage kidneys over several years. There may be no evidence of kidney malfunction until severe damage has occurred.
- People who are older, people with a family history of high blood pressure, people who are overweight and African Americans have a greater risk of developing high blood pressure. African-Americans also tend to develop it at a younger age, and develop more severe high blood pressure.
- 65 million Americans have elevated blood pressures requiring treatment with drugs, but half of these individuals are not aware of it.
- Good blood pressure management is important to protect kidney function. A blood pressure of 120/80, or lower, is recommended.
- It is also important to maintain a normal weight, exercise on a regular basis and don't smoke!
- High blood pressure can affect anyone at any age. It is less frequent in children; however, regular blood pressure checkups should begin in childhood and continue throughout life.
- Elevated blood pressure frequently causes no symptoms at all, although some people may experience dizziness, headaches or nose bleeds.
- An important test to determine kidney function is called GFR (Glomerular Filtration Rate). GFR is the percent of kidney function. (It is calculated based on a person's blood creatinine, their gender, weight and ethnicity.) A healthy GFR is 90 or above. A GFR of 15 or less usually indicates kidney failure, and the need for dialysis or kidney transplant.
- If your kidneys have already been damaged (GFR between 30-60) medications called ACE inhibitors and Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARB's) can protect your kidneys and keep them working for as long as possible. Ask your doctor.