



MEDIA RELEASE

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CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE ON THE RISE IN SA

Life Healthcare encourages preventive behaviour to reduce risk of kidney disease

Johannesburg, South Africa: 2-6 September 2015 marks Kidney Awareness Week in South Africa. Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) has been estimated to affect as much as 15% of the South African population¹. According to the National Kidney Foundation of South Africa, it also represents a growing healthcare problem with some 20 000 new patients requiring diagnosis and treatment every year.

What is Chronic Kidney Disease?

Chronic Kidney Disease is a dangerous medical condition characterized by a gradual loss of kidney function over time, which if left untreated can then lead to Chronic Renal Failure (CRF). Once you've reached end-stage chronic renal failure you have two options – dialysis for the rest of your life, or a kidney transplant.

Kidneys are among our most vital organs as they filter toxins and produce essential chemicals in our bodies. When the kidneys stop functioning properly our body becomes toxic and we cannot survive. The difficulty lies in the fact that Chronic Kidney Disease is an insidious disease - it often goes undetected as many people whose kidneys are dysfunctional do not develop symptoms until their kidneys are close to failing.²

How Life Healthcare is helping

Life Renal Dialysis, part of the Life Healthcare Group, is a specialised healthcare service dedicated to treating patients on acute and chronic renal dialysis. These specialised services assist patients in chronic renal failure requiring out-patient chronic services; or requiring peritoneal dialysis at home; or in acute renal failure in an acute hospital facility.

“Early detection is crucial when managing Chronic Kidney Disease so we definitely support initiatives such as Kidney Awareness Week. We're committed to caring for patients with acute and chronic

kidney disease and have a total of 18 Life hospitals with chronic Renal Dialysis centres in Gauteng, and the Eastern and Western Cape and one in Botswana. Our services include expert collaborative management solutions made up of nephrologists, vascular surgeons, intensivists, cardiologists, endocrinologists, experienced renal nurses and technologists, psychologists, dieticians and social workers. It's a real team effort," says Dr Riyas Fadal, Life Healthcare Group Clinical Products Manager.

"It's important to note that the two main causes of chronic kidney disease are diabetes and high blood pressure. With the increased burden of lifestyle-induced diseases in South Africa, our doctors are fully aware of the causes of Chronic Kidney Disease. Patients tend to be satisfied with medicine compliance only, and fail to do the necessary GP checks, so an important aspect is routine follow-ups with GPs to ensure that kidney care is optimised, and complications for diabetes and hypertension are well managed.

"We encourage preventive behaviour through weight management, not smoking, keeping fit, watching sugar intake, monitoring blood pressure, and eating a healthy and varied diet," says Dr Fadal.

"Many people aren't aware of the symptoms of kidney disease and early detection can circumvent the need for dialysis or a transplant if treated soon enough," continued Dr Fadal.

You're encouraged to visit a doctor if:

- you're more tired than usual;
- have trouble sleeping;
- experience dry and itchy skin,
- feel the need to urinate more often;
- see blood or foam in your urine;
- have persistent puffiness around the eyes;
- your ankles and feet are swollen;
- your appetite is poor, or
- if your muscles are continuously cramping.

Facts about Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

- It has been estimated that 10% of the world's population has some degree of CKD ³

- It is estimated that 5 million South Africans over the age of 20 years of age have CKD ³
- Kidney failure in South African adults is mainly due to inherited Hypertension (60-65%) or Type 2 Diabetes (another 20-25%) ⁴
- High risk groups include those with diabetes, hypertension and family history of kidney failure ⁴
- Kidney failure in the black population is 4 times higher than other groups – due to the high incidence of Hypertension ⁴
- Hypertension causes CKD and CKD causes hypertension ⁴
- Two simple tests can detect CKD: blood pressure, urine albumin and serum creatinine ⁴
- Early detection can help prevent the progression of kidney disease to kidney failure ⁴

Facts about kidneys in everyday life

Our kidneys make 150 litres of urine a day, but keep back (reabsorb) 149 litres of useful substances, like protein, and excrete two litres of waste. They can be likened to a huge swimming pool filter which never needs backwashing, and will rarely need an overhaul if you look after your health! ⁵

For more information about Life Renal Dialysis units visit lifehealthcaregroup.co.za and for more information on how to keep your kidneys healthy please visit nkf.org.za

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References:

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3. www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?pid=S0256-95742015000400027&script=sci_arttext
4. www.kidney.org/kidneydisease/aboutckd
5. www.nkf.org.za/kidney_disease.html

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