

TRUST'S CKD FREE RAPID-SCREENING PROGRAM GATHERS STEAM



Staff members and volunteers for The Kidney TRUST were in Washington, D.C. in late September to bring The TRUST's kidney disease rapid-screening program to an annual health fair sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus ("CBC"). Over 500 people were screened over a four-day period as part of the CBC Spouses Annual Community Breakfast and Health Fair. With the completion of the CBC event, the TRUST had screened over 3,500 people in the first year of the program.

According to the TRUST's program director, Revkah Balingit, "CBC Health Fair organizers were especially interested in bringing kidney disease screening to the health fair this year because African-Americans are one of those groups who are at increased risk for CKD." Other CKD risk factors include diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, a family history of kidney disease, and increasing age. Hispanics and Native Americans are also at increased risk for the disease.

The goal of the TRUST's free rapid-testing program, which was launched in October 2007, is to identify individuals who have signs of kidney impairment. Along with learning their screening results onsite, participants receive materials that offer education about CKD and its prevention and are encouraged to seek medical follow-up as appropriate.

One of the highlights of the three-day CBC screening event was an early morning visit to So Others May Eat ("SOME") - an interfaith, community based organization that exists to help the poor and homeless in Washington, D.C. A number of SOME's clients received free screening for CKD, in addition to receiving needed food and clothing at the event.

Revkah summed up the first twelve months: "Over the last year we have partnered with a number of corporations, non-profits and community organizations to offer free CKD screening to their constituents. We've developed a flexible screening model that can be scaled up or down based on the size of the event and the needs of our co-sponsors. We're looking forward to expanding our network of partners and continuing to grow the program in 2009."

In 2008 screenings are being held across the United States, including California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Michigan, Ohio, Texas and Virginia. Screenings are also taking place at DaVita KAT Walks Across America™ in 12 states.

TOUR DAVITA ROLLS TO THE FINISH LINE

The second annual Tour DaVita™ rolled to the finish line in Algoma, Wisconsin on September 18th with riders completing a 280-mile bike ride to raise awareness about chronic kidney disease ("CKD") and raise funds for The Kidney TRUST. Led by DaVita® Chairman and CEO Kent Thiry, 217 DaVita teammates participated

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The Kidney TRUST
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Visit our new website at
KidneyTRUST.org

in the four-day event.

Just a few days later, about 2,000 miles west in Tacoma, Washington, hundreds of supporters stepped out on Sunday, September 21 as part of the DaVita KAT Walks Across America™. Tacoma was the 11th stop in a 20-city walkathon dedicated to raising money to fight CKD and benefit The Kidney TRUST.

DaVita, which is the founding sponsor of The Kidney TRUST and a leading provider of kidney care services in the U.S., sponsors both events as part of the company's commitment to reduce the progression of kidney disease in the U.S.



The Kidney TRUST's President Barbara Lawson, who was in Wisconsin to cheer on the Tour DaVita riders, commented, "Participants came from all parts of the country to ride together and make a personal contribution to the fight against kidney disease. These dedicated DaVita teammates spent countless hours training for the ride, while raising thousands of dollars for the fight against kidney disease, but the riders I spoke with said that it was a 'labor of love' given how strongly they feel about the cause. All of us at The Kidney TRUST are so pleased and proud to be the beneficiary of their efforts, which will support the expansion of the Kidney TRUST's CKD rapid-screening program currently rolling out around the U.S."

The 3rd annual national "Kidney Awareness Time" Walk-a-thon (KAT Walk™) kicked off on June 29th in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Walkers from all across the U.S. are participating in this year's walks. The DaVita KAT Walks Across America will pass through 20 cities in 16 states, ending on December 7 in Orlando, Florida.

"26 million Americans have chronic kidney disease, yet nine in ten of them don't even know it because early-stage CKD rarely has symptoms," said Janelle London, a director with DaVita and a kidney disease patient herself. "That's why we walk - to let people know of the importance of getting tested now, rather than discover they have the disease when it is already too late to prevent kidney failure."

For more information about Tour DaVita and the DaVita KAT Walks Across America visit www.tourdavita.com and www.davitakatwalks.com.

KIDNEY DISEASE AND YOUR HEART: THE HIDDEN LINK

When you have kidney disease, it might not occur to you to have your heart checked out. Or, if you have heart disease, you might not think to have your kidneys tested. As it turns out, checking both your heart and your kidneys is a good idea if you have either kind of health problem.

Why? Because diseases that affect the kidneys can also damage your heart—and vice versa. In fact, many doctors think of the heart and kidneys as one interlinked body system rather than separate organs.

Having both heart and kidney disease can cause 20 times the risk of death from heart problems than either problem alone. In looking at more than 18,000 people, a decline in kidney function predicted a 62% higher risk of death from heart failure. Heart disease happens very early in the course of kidney disease—so even just a small decline in kidney function should trigger efforts to help protect your heart.

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Your Heart and Kidneys Never Sleep

While you can take a break after a hard day, your heart can't. Its job is to pump oxygen-rich blood from your lungs to each cell in your body, minute after minute, day after day. If your heart beats at the average rate of about 75 times a minute, this means more than 39 million beats a year!

With each heartbeat, blood is pushed through your kidneys for filtering. Though your two kidneys are each just about the size of your closed fist, they process about 200 quarts of blood per day to make about two liters of urine. To do their work, your kidneys need a constant supply of blood at a normal pressure. Too little blood or too little pressure can cause acute, sudden kidney failure. Too much blood or too much pressure can lead to scarring that can cause chronic, permanent kidney disease.

The Low Side of High Blood Pressure

Healthy kidneys "work" with your heart to control your blood pressure. Any time your blood pressure falls, kidneys release the enzyme *renin* into your blood. Renin signals your liver to make the hormone *angiotensin*, which tells blood vessels to constrict—raising blood pressure. This *renin-angiotensin system* (RAS) acts on your heart and your kidneys. An overactive RAS can lead to kidney problems. Cells may grow too fast or too slowly, causing inflammation, hardening of the arteries, and blood clots.

High blood pressure is quite common in the United States, and can damage your heart and your kidneys. High blood pressure causes tiny tears in the flexible lining of your blood vessels. The scars that form make vessels walls stiff. When this happens, your heart has to work much harder to pump blood through the damaged vessels. These damaged vessels may not be able to deliver enough blood to organs so this can lead to both heart and kidney failure.

What's Blood got to do with it?

A number of health problems that involve your blood can harm both your heart and your kidneys. One is *anemia*—a shortage of oxygen-carrying red blood cells. Kidneys make *erythropoietin* (EPO), the hormone that tells your bone marrow to make red blood cells. As the kidneys fail, less EPO is made, so you make fewer red blood cells. With fewer red blood cells, your body does not get enough oxygen. Anemia can speed up the rate of kidney failure.

Other blood-related risk factors for heart and kidney problems include:

1. **High blood levels of cholesterol** – a waxy fat that can clog your arteries and lead to blood clots that can damage your heart or kidneys
2. **Inflammation** – your body's response to infection or other injury, which can cause swelling and damage in your blood vessels
3. **Blood vessel calcification** – a build up of stone-like crystals that can occur when kidney disease throws off the balance of calcium and phosphorus in your blood

The human body is very complex, and doctors are actively studying even more reasons why the heart and kidneys affect each other.

What You Can Do

To help your kidneys and your heart work as well as possible, do what you can to keep the normal balance inside your body.

The main job of your kidneys is to maintain *homeostasis*—a constant

31 MILLION
ADULT AMERICANS
- HAVE -
**CHRONIC KIDNEY
DISEASE**
- AND -
**90% DON'T
KNOW IT**
ARE YOU ONE OF THEM?

environment inside your body. Kidneys have built in sensors. At any given moment, healthy kidneys ensure that blood levels of water, salts, and other key chemicals are in perfect balance. When they begin to fail, this very precise system starts to fall apart. While we may not yet know exactly why this affects the heart, we know that it does. Here are some things you can do:

1. **Control your blood pressure.** Blood pressure pills, diet, and exercise can help reduce the stress on your blood vessels. This can help keep both your kidneys and your heart healthy. You may find that a low-salt diet can help make it easier to hit the blood pressure target your doctor gives you.
2. **Learn your glomerular filtration rate (GFR).** Based on your age, race, sex, and blood level of creatinine (a waste removed by healthy kidneys), your GFR is an estimate of how well your kidneys work. GFR is used to put chronic kidney disease into one of five stages. Finding out that you have loss of kidney function can give you time to get treatment so to protect your kidneys and heart at the same time. In many cases when kidney disease is found early enough kidney failure can be delayed or prevented.
3. **Keep your phosphorus in line.** If you have kidney disease, your doctor may prescribe phosphate binders for you to take with meals and snacks. These drugs attach to phosphorus molecules like magnets and pull them out of your body—so you can keep the right balance of calcium and phosphorus. Too much phosphorus can lead to high levels of calcium being deposited in soft tissues such as blood vessels. Taking binders can help keep this from happening.
4. **Ask your doctor to test you for anemia.** Most people who have some level of kidney problem also have anemia, which can be found with a simple blood test. Sometimes the symptoms of anemia—feeling very tired, weak, or cold all the time; fuzzy thinking; pale skin, lips, gums, and nail beds, etc. These symptoms can come on so slowly that you don't really notice. If you have anemia, getting treatment can give you more energy and help your heart and kidneys.

Forewarned is Forearmed

Knowing that kidney disease and heart disease go hand-in-hand can help you know what to look for. You and your doctor can work together and take action to prevent health problems.

The good news is that both kidney disease and heart disease can be treated to help you stay healthy.

Part 2 of Kidney Disease and Your Heart: The Hidden Link focuses on diabetes, at kidneytrust.org/learn/diabetes/.