

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

How a Denver Woman Has Protected Her Kidney Health

When Crystal Meyer participated in The Kidney TRUST's screening program in March of 2008 at a company health fair in Denver, she was only doing so to keep a friend company. At 26 years old and in good health she didn't think that she had anything to worry about when it came to kidney disease. When she learned later that day that her eGFR result was less than 60, indicating that she had a moderate decrease in kidney function, she was shocked: "I had no idea that it would be a problem," Crystal said.



Crystal Meyer

As a business analyst for DaVita, Inc., one of the leading providers of kidney care in the U.S., Crystal knew more than most about kidney disease, but she didn't dream that she could be affected. According to Crystal, "It was a real wake-up call to me. I went to the doctor soon after I got the test result and was told that I needed to cut down on my salt intake, get more exercise, and eat a healthier diet. I changed my diet, started working out three times a week, and lost about 20 pounds."

When the TRUST's screening program came back to Denver during National Kidney Month in March of 2009, a friend urged Crystal to get screened again to see if her kidney function might be showing progress to match her new health lifestyle. When the screening result came back indicating no further loss of kidney function, Crystal was very pleased. "The result really validated everything I'd

done to improve my health," said Crystal. She concluded, "It wasn't easy changing my diet and getting into a regular workout regime, but it has definitely been worth it. It was either that or end up where I didn't want to be."

According to TRUST program director Revkah Balingit, "Crystal's story demonstrates what can be achieved when someone really takes responsibility for their health. Crystal took the advice she received last year to heart and is now doing everything she can, through diet and exercise, to protect her kidneys and heart. By taking action today, she's ensuring that her kidneys will last her entire life."

CKD RAPID-SCREENING PROGRAM WILL HIT 10,000 MILESTONE IN JULY

By mid-July 2009, The Kidney TRUST will have administered the 10,000th screen in its innovative Chronic Kidney Disease ("CKD") rapid-screening program, which was launched in October 2007.

The screening program has benefited individuals like Gilberto Heredia, who participated in a community-based CKD screening event in a small town in

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southeastern Texas earlier this year. Gilberto has had his diabetes under control for many years, but didn't realize that diabetes was a significant risk factor for kidney disease.

When his screening results came back with an eGFR under 60, he was advised to seek medical advice. Gilberto saw his doctor for the first time in over a year and his medical team is now focused on his kidney health as well as his diabetes. Gilberto said, "I'm very grateful to The Kidney TRUST for making me aware of the threat to my kidneys and following up with me several times after the screening to make sure that I received the proper care."

The goal of the TRUST's screening program 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. The TRUST's screening program is carried out in non-medical settings such as large employer workplaces and community health fairs.

According to the TRUST's program director Revkah Balingit, "We're very pleased that we've been able to reach so many people in the initial roll-out of our screening program. About 8% of the people who have been screened so far have an eGFR of below 60, which indicates a decrease in kidney function – the people in this group have been urged to seek medical follow-up. As we've moved into community settings this year, we've been reaching more people with decreased kidney function – so far in 2009 over 15% of the people screened have eGFRs below 60, indicating that we're doing an increasingly good job targeting those at risk."

The Kidney TRUST's President and CEO Barbara Lawson commented, "We're very excited about reaching this milestone, which shows that we're helping to create a new way of thinking about kidney disease. We're seeing the impact – the people we reach go away with knowledge about kidney disease that millions of Americans don't have, including the understanding that they can take action to prevent or slow the progression of CKD."

DIABETES, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND YOUR KIDNEYS

Including questions you can ask your doctor

Diabetes and high blood pressure increase your risk of kidney disease. People with diabetes are three times more likely to have high blood pressure than someone without diabetes. You can lower your risk for kidney disease by controlling your diabetes, blood pressure, and by maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

DIABETES

Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney disease in the U.S, accounting for almost half of all new cases. Diabetes damages the small blood vessels of the kidney which can lead to loss of function. These blood vessel changes can also affect the skin, nerves, muscles, intestines, and the heart.

Treatment should begin early and includes controlling diabetes to slow the advance to kidney failure:

- Maintain blood sugar and blood pressure within a healthy range
- Regular testing
 - Microalbumin, protein found in the urine
 - Glomerular filtration rate (GFR), a measure of kidney function

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Questions to ask your doctor:

1. What should my blood sugar range be?
2. What is my A1C?
3. How often should I check my blood sugar?
4. How can I help control my blood sugar?
5. Should I see a diabetes specialist?
6. Should I talk with a dietitian?
7. Am I taking the right medicines for my diabetes?
8. Should I have blood or urine tests to check kidney function?

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure is the second leading cause of kidney disease in the U.S., leading to one fourth of the new cases. Uncontrolled or poorly controlled blood pressure can cause permanent damage to the blood vessels of the kidney, decreasing the ability to filter fluids and waste from the blood.

Early detection and treatment of even mild high blood pressure is important to slow the advance of kidney disease:

- Maintain blood pressure within a healthy range
- Use medicines such as ACE inhibitors and ARBS if ordered by doctor (not everyone can take these medicines)

Many organizations, such as the American Heart Association (AHA) and the American Diabetes Association (ADA) have recommendations about blood pressure readings. Talk to your doctor about what your target blood pressure should be. Keeping your blood pressure within a healthy range will lower your risk for problems.

Questions to ask your doctor:

1. What is my blood pressure?
2. What can I do to lower my blood pressure?
3. Should I be on blood pressure medicine?
4. Do I need a blood pressure monitor to check my blood pressure at home?
5. How often should I check my blood pressure?
6. Should I have blood or urine tests to check kidney function?

KIDNEY FUNCTION

Diabetes and high blood pressure are the two most common causes of kidney disease. Ask your doctor about your kidney function.

Questions to ask your doctor:

1. Am I at risk for kidney disease?
2. What signs and symptoms are there for kidney damage?
3. Are there blood or urine tests I should be having, and how often?
4. Do I have kidney disease now?
5. If so, what stage am I?
6. How often will you track my glomerular filtration rate (GFR)?
7. How will I know if my kidney function has changed?
8. When should I see a kidney specialist?

DELAYING KIDNEY DISEASE

If you have kidney disease there are ways to help keep your kidneys working well as long as they can. One of the most important things you can do is learn

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

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Join us in the fight against
kidney disease



as much as you can and ask questions.

Questions to ask your doctor:

- How can I protect my kidneys?
- What can I do to avoid or delay kidney disease?
- Are there medicines I should avoid?
- Are there medicines I should take to protect my kidneys?
- What changes should I make in my diet?
- How can I stop smoking?
- How often should I see my doctor?
- Should I see a kidney specialist?

More information: www.KidneyTRUST.org Email: info@kidneytrust.org