

Kidney Foundation recognizes African American History Month

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The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) is recognizing African American History Month this February by spreading awareness about the increased risk of diabetes and kidney disease in African Americans, and the importance of health management to prevent these chronic health conditions. Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, causing more than 40 percent of all cases. For African American adults with diabetes, it's important to control your disease and take care of your health to prevent future health complications, such as kidney failure.

An estimated 4.9 million — 18.7 percent — of all non-Hispanic blacks age 20 and older have diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes. Diabetes is four times more likely to cause kidney failure in African Americans than in Caucasians. In addition to kidney failure, unmanaged diabetes can lead to other serious complications such as blindness, limb amputation, heart attack and stroke.

Luckily, people with diabetes can lower the occurrence of these complications by controlling blood glucose, blood pressure, and blood lipids.

- **Learn About Diabetes.** Diabetes means that your blood glucose (sugar) is too high. Diabetes is serious because it can damage your heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves.
- **Know Your Numbers.** Ask your doctor what diabetes target numbers are best for you. Learn about your A1C, blood pressure and cholesterol numbers (known as the ABCs of diabetes).
- **Manage Your Diabetes.** Keep track of your diabetes numbers, be active on most days of the week, eat healthy, and don't smoke.
- **Get Regular Care.** Contact your health care team if you have any questions or problems as you manage your diabetes, medicines or supplies.

Despite the increased risk of kidney disease and diabetes in African Americans, type 2 diabetes can be prevented, delayed and managed, which can reduce the chance of having other health issues down the road.

Visit www.kidney.org for more information about diabetes and kidney disease care and prevention, or for information on upcoming diabetes classes and workshops. You can also call the NKF at (800) 596-7943.