



Focus on diabetes

WORLD KIDNEY Day (WKD) is usually observed every year on the second Tuesday of March. This year, however, WKD will be observed on Thursday (March 11).

This year marks the fifth year the global health awareness campaign is being held, with more than 100 countries across six continents, including Malaysia, participating in it.

The theme for WKD 2010 is "Protect Your Kidneys – Control Diabetes". Diabetes represents a leading and common cause of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) worldwide.

When CKD worsens and leads to kidney failure, the next step is dialysis or transplantation. Malaysia has 20,000 dialysis patients – 55% of all new patients are diabetic and generally respond poorly to treatments.

According to the Ministry of Health's Nephrology Services national advisor Dr Ghazali Ahmad, not all diabetics develop kidney disease.

"The likelihood of developing kidney disease depends on risk factors like family history of diabetic kidney disease, presence of hypertension, degree of blood pressure and blood sugar control," he said in a statement.

Meanwhile, the National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia (NKF), Malaysian Society of Nephrology (MSN) and the Ministry of Health are jointly conducting a health screening road show in Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang and Selangor, beginning March 6.

The NKF LifeCheck Mobile Health Screening Unit, consisting of a 40-seater customised bus with seven workstations, is being utilised to conduct the free health screening for members of the public. Kidney health and organ donation exhibitions will also be held at all road show stops.

Major hospitals nationwide are also carrying out various activities, such as health screening and public forums, in conjunction with WKD. – **Rachelle Gan**