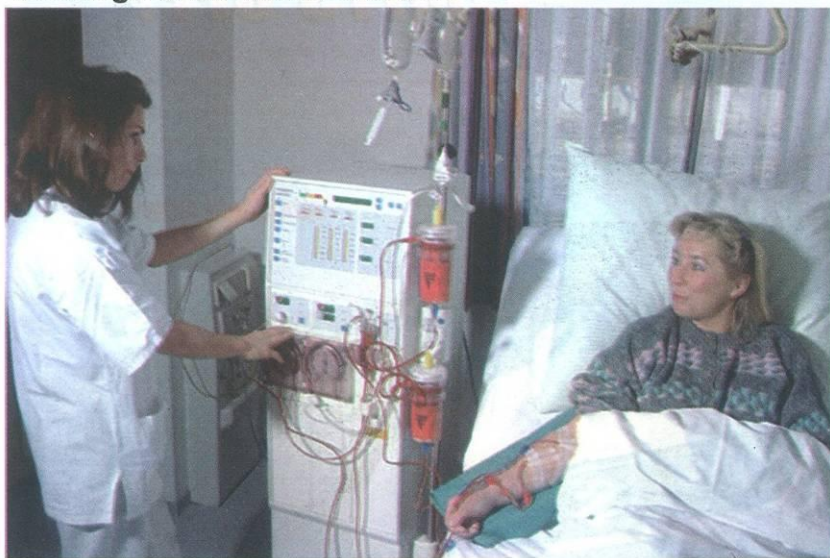


# Like a kidney in the wind

With millions of lives at stake, the world is raising its voice against a 'silent' disease



ON March 13, World Kidney Day was celebrated for the third consecutive year in over 60 countries around the world. The theme for this year was *Amazing Kidneys to underscore the important role played by the organs to filter and clean 200 litres of blood daily. They remove toxins and excess water from the body in the form of urine, while also producing important hormones that help make blood, regulate blood pressure and keep our bones strong.*

To commemorate the occasion, medical and patient groups worldwide were mobilised to raise awareness on these vital and sophisticated organs — and spread the message that Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is common, harmful and *treatable*.

The concern of medical personnel worldwide is the rising number of patients with CKD, which is defined as when the kidneys become damaged and gradually lose their ability to function. It is a silent disease that often goes unnoticed until the disease is in an advanced stage.

Malaysia will see the staging of its own general awareness

campaign, which will culminate in the Amazing Kidneys Walk on Sunday, March 16. It is organised by the National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia, which promotes awareness of the killer disease.

Ministry of Health's head of Nephrology Services, Datuk Dr Rozina Ghazalli, said more than 500 million people have some form of kidney damage.

"CKD is rising, mainly due to the worldwide increase in Type 2 Diabetes, and is a major global public health issue," she said.

It is projected by global health authorities that diabetes will increase by 70 per cent by 2025, affecting a total of 300 million people around the world. The hardest hit group? The populations of developing nations.

"Developing nations, with their rising incomes, are seeing a transformation in lifestyles, and a rising incidence of obesity and diabetes," said Dr Rozina.

"Steps have to be taken to educate the public on these and other cases of CKD and how to avoid it in the long term.

"This will not only prevent or reduce kidney failure and complications from

cardiovascular disease, it will reduce the psychosocial and huge economic burden on the patient, family, community and government. If CKD progresses to End Stage Renal Failure, the patient will then need dialysis or a kidney transplant, and such treatments are costly and require a vast amount of resources."

In Malaysia, the 2006 National Renal Registry reported that more than 18,000 patients were on dialysis or had had a kidney transplant as the result of kidney failure. In order to live, people with severe kidney failure must either receive a transplanted kidney or undergo up to three dialysis treatments, which are often painful, per week.

Fortunately, however, CKD can be detected early and easily. Simple, inexpensive urine and blood tests will be able to detect the signs of CKD, as will blood pressure measurements. High risk groups are diabetics, hypertensives, those with a family history of kidney disease, obese individuals, smokers and generally those over 50. This group should be screened regularly — at least once a year — for kidney disease.

## Knowing your CKD

### What is Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)?

CKD is present when individuals have an increase in the excretion of albumin in the urine, or a major decrease in kidney function or Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR). This may lead to complications, such as high blood pressure, anaemia, and heart and blood vessel disease.

### How common is CKD?

Globally, more than 500 million individuals, or about one in 10 adults in the general population, have some degree of CKD.

### What causes CKD?

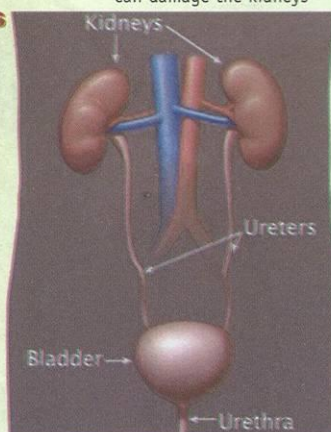
The most common causes of CKD have been nephrotic or inflammatory diseases of the kidney, infections, obstruction in the urinary tract and inherited disorders like polycystic kidney disease. This is changing in both developed and developing nations towards diabetes and hypertension, which are the most common causes of cardiovascular disease.

### How is CKD detected?

Simple laboratory tests are done on small samples of urine and blood to measure creatinine content, and calculated GFR and albumin excretion.

### What are the prevention measures for CKD?

1. Control of blood pressure
2. Control of diabetes mellitus
3. Stopping smoking
4. Weight control
5. Drinking at least two litres of water daily
6. Avoiding taking drugs that can damage the kidneys



## The Amazing Kidneys Walk

DO your bit to help patients with, and promote awareness of, CKD by participating in the Amazing Kidneys Walk on Sunday at Taman Jaya Recreational Park, PJ (opposite Amcorp Mall).

Registration is at 7am and the walk (4km for adults and 2km for children aged 12 and below, and dialysis patients) commences at 8am.

Participation for both

categories is RM20 per person, with all proceeds going to the National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia. Each participant will receive a World Kidney Day T-shirt and a goodie bag.

Other activities lined up for the day are health talks, health screenings, children's art competitions and a lucky draw.

For more information, call 03-7954 9048 ext 225/207 or log on to [www.nkf.org.my](http://www.nkf.org.my)

