



AST year, there were 4,000 new patients with kidney failure in the country who needed dialysis treatment, according to the National Kidney Foundation.

Globally, more than 500 million individuals or about 1 in 10 adults have some form of chronic kidney

CKD is when the kidneys can no longer eliminate bodily waste because of several factors — such as infections or underlying chronic diseases like high blood pressure and

According to the NKF, the number of CKD patients in need of dialysis increases every year, with 24,000 on treatment last year.

patients, what is even scarier is that high blood pressure many people are unaware that their kidneys are damaged until it is too

silent killer, but preventable if the impact on one's kidneys," he says. advises that they maintain a healthy public is willing to make some simple honorary secretary Dr JD John.

A sedentary lifestyle and bad eating habits are the two main culprits

well as sweetened drinks can lead to lifestyle (stop smoking!). per cent of new cases develope from 3. Drink at least six glasses of due to the high cost of treatment. high blood pressure and diabetes," water a day (helps your kidneys to Also, patients are likely to lose their says Dr John who adds that kidney function). tion, inflammation of blood vessels cations or supplements.

Other possible causes include risk groups (those who smoke or are According to the Health Minis- approved by the Health prolonged consumption of pain obese, are over 50 years of age, those try's Economic Evaluation of Centre Ministry could be one relievers, alcohol or drugs including with a family history of diabetes, Haemodialysis in 2004, the minis- of the possible causes of prescription medication.



Besides the growing number of **Dr John** says more than 60 per cent of new CKD cases develop from diabetes and

"Taking questionable or unau- ease, as well as patients with diathorised supplements (like those not betes, high blood pressure or other "The signs and symptoms will approved by the Health Ministry) kidney diseases). only appear in later stages. It's a or slimming pills can also have an As for current patients, Dr John

Dr John says healthy individuals diet, do low-impact exercises such changes in their lifestyle," says NKF just need to take five simple steps to as walking, and control their body protect themselves.

These are: 1. Practise good eating habits (lower the fat, salt and sugar con-"Lack of exercise and eating too tent in your diet and add more fibre, Kidney disease requires lifelong care much fast food or processed food as fruit and vegetables), and a healthy and regular dialysis treatments. It is

various illnesses, such as high blood 2. Exercise three times a week, 30 cially, and many patients are unable pressure and diabetes. More than 60 minutes per session if possible. to receive the proper care required

Don't take unauthorised mediin the kidneys, kidney stones and 5. Go for health screening, espe- RM2,000 for 13 sessions every traditional medicines cially those who fall under the high- month.

a burden both physically and finanincome as their health deteriorates. A patient undergoing a dialy-

sis treatment requires more than Slimming pills or

weight, blood pressure, blood glu-

cose and cholesterol levels.

such as "jamu" not high blood pressure or kidney dis- try spends between RM32,000 and CKD



now," she says.

the dialysis centre.

small support group to

help new patients, to

Dr John says the NKF is among mahjong and even enjoy makan-

the non-profit organisations which makan trips — I'm a food lover, but provides affordable dialysis treatments and

"We assist patients Signs and by subsidising RM52 for each treatment. With an additional FEW people are RM50 subsidy from the aware of kidney ministry, the patient damage until they will only pay RM50 have had a medical per treatment or about

RM650 per month. "At present, the NKF needs RM31 million annually to help more than 1,000 patients at of the following 25 centres nationwide. But with the number of the cost may be more in the near future," he urine.

ON DIALYSIS, BUT LIVING

a chronic disease may leave some individuals feeling robbed of their lives, but not Tang Ah

Tang has been 7. Persistent receiving dialysis puffiness treatment after she around the eyes, was diagnosed with particularly in the CKD in 2006. Despite morning. having to undergo

three treatments per week (four hours per treatment) at thing is going to be fine as long as tions and eventually, she coped with "My son used to be playful and their health," she says. the NKF Dialysis Centre in Petaling they stay positive. By doing that, I the situation. Jaya, Selangor, the bubbly mother of feel good about myself too," she says, "My main concern was money. I was diagnosed with CKD. He has end of the world, but a blessing in

Depending on the

A change in the

Frequent urination

especially during

6. Swelling of the

urination.

4. Back pain.

the night.

"When I'm not on treatment, I will the patients handicraft. check on my family's small advertisThe handicrafts are usually sold me. Luckily I was recommended for my thrice-weekly treatments, espe-feel the same way," she says. ing business which is now run by my during NKF roadshows or exhibitreatment at NKF at a subsidised cially after his elder sisters married,"

I eat in moderation THERE are more than 500 dialysis centres in the country "I do low-impact run by government hospitals exercises such as brisk private institutions and charity

walking to keep fit," organisations. · AS of January, there are 15,078 says the energetic patients on the national organ However, what she transplant waiting list. Of thi number, 15,055 are waiting for loves the most is helping other patients at

kidney transplant. · Details about NKF, its services Fondly known as and how you can help at www. nkf.org.my, or call 03-7954 Aunty Tang at the centre, she has formed a 9048.

foster a sense of self- tions and provide the patients with esteem and to share some side income.

experiences so they can face what lies ahead. BLESSING IN DISGUISE

"Most patients who Recalling the moment when she check into the centre discovered that she had CKD, Tang for the first time are admits that she was devastated. bewildered. Some even However, she knew that she had no feel that having kidney one to blame but herself. The kidney However, if necessary, a patient will and the National Transplant disease is like 'being on disease took its toll on her after she be recommended to adjust intake. Centre. failed to manage her diabetes well.

"So I teamed up "I've been a diabetic since I gave with several 'senior' birth to Yew Hsung. I also suffered patients to talk to the from hypertension. Despite that, I new ones and to share didn't watch my diet or change my rate," she says. our knowledge and lifestyle. When my husband passed Tangused to pay RM180 per treat- She also treasures life more now experiences. Based away in 1999, I was so busy running ment, but now she pays RM50 under — not only hers, but that of people on what we've been the family business and taking care the subsidised dialysis treatment for she cares about, including friends through, we know it's of my three children that I forgot to the poor and needy offered by NKF. and patients at the dialysis centre.

important to let them take care of my health," she recalls. Tang says the illness has helped "It has become my habit to remind know that they are not Tang says by accepting her fate, her grow closer to her family, espe-my children and the people around alone and that every- she successfully overcame her emo- cially Yew Hsung.

three is living life to the fullest. adding that she also helps to teach I knew the cost of 13 dialysis treat- been taking care of me and making disguise. It's time to live life to the ments a month was too much for sure that I eat well and never miss fullest and I want other patients to

CKD AND NUTRITION

harmful to a patient as it results in water retention and raises blood pressure. A patient should not consume more than one teaspoon 2.4g) of salt per day and avoid food which is high in sodium content such as sauces (soya sauce, Excessive salt intake results in ketchup, chilli sauce and season- water retention and raises blood ng), processed food (canned food, pressure sausages, nuggets and burger patties etc.), food marinated with salt (salted fish or egg, anchovies, dried Some high potassium foods are prawns, belacan, fermented shrimp potato, squash, banana, orange, and pickles, etc.), as well as instant tomato, dried peas and beans.

Due to the decreased kidney func- be monitored. Besides water, other tion, a patient's kidney may not be edible stuff in liquid forms at room able to remove enough phosphate temperature are also considered flufrom the blood. This causes him or ids, such as soups and ice cream. her to have a high blood phosphate To do this, patients should drink level which can cause itchiness and from prepared bottles so that they do loss of calcium from the bones, lead- not overdrink. Eat less sodium-laden

High-phosphate foods that Take candy or chewing gum to nuts and peanut butter as well as thirsty. beverages like hot chocolate, and

alcohol and carbonated drinks.

should be avoided include dairy produce more saliva and wet your products, kidney beans, split peas, mouth with an ice cube if you are

Sources: Healthy Eating & Chronic Kidney Disease (Stage 3 & 4) pamphlet by the NKF and the Usually people with CKD do not Malaysian Dietitians' Association, the National Kidney Foundation

food so you won't feel thirsty.

Fluid intake for CKD patients must

carefree, but he changed a lot after "For me, having CKD is not the

me to eat right, exercise and value