

Kidney Disease: the silent killer affecting YOU – and how to prevent it

- South Asian people are up to FIVE times at greater risk of developing chronic kidney disease (CKD) than the white community.
- Diabetes and high blood pressure are the two major causes of kidney disease in the Asian community. When diabetes and high blood pressure are not properly controlled, kidney disease is more likely.
- Did you know that Asian people with diabetes are TEN times more likely to develop kidney failure than a white person with diabetes?
- The symptoms of kidney disease often do not appear until the advanced stages of the illness – and so it is called the silent killer. Therefore it is vital to look after yourself and monitor your health early and regularly.

These are worrying facts. Kidney Research UK, the leading national charity is aiming to help these at risk communities by raising awareness into kidney disease and highlighting the importance of healthy living and looking after your kidneys. We are also funding research into the causes, prevention and treatment of kidney disease among the South Asian and minority ethnic communities. The Charity has called this initiative: *ABLE - A Better Life through Education and Empowerment*.

Keeping your kidneys healthy if you have Diabetes Or High Blood Pressure...

Make sure you know from your GP/Consultant what your blood pressure and blood sugar levels should be & how to monitor and control them through diet, exercise and medication:

- If you are diabetic, your HbA1c level should be discussed with your doctor, and should usually be less than 7%. This is blood test which is done and sent to the laboratory and checks your average sugar level in your blood over the last 3 months.
- To keep your kidneys healthy, if you have diabetes, your blood pressure should be well controlled eg. 130/80 (please discuss the best level for you with your Doctors Practice)

General Advice to Keep Your Kidneys Healthy (if you do not have diabetes or high blood pressure)...

- Ensure you maintain a healthy weight*
- Drink plenty of water - 2 litres a day
- Take regular moderate exercise for half an hour, five or more times a week*

- Make sure you have less than 6g of salt a day as any more can lead to kidney damage.
- Keep fatty foods to a minimum
- Consume a good well balanced healthy diet including fruit & vegetables*
- Do not smoke*
- Keep your blood pressure under 140/90 if you do not have diabetes (please discuss with your Doctors Practice)
- If you have an immediate family member with diabetes, high blood pressure or kidney disease, go and see your GP for advice and possible screening as you often only get symptoms when it's too late.

(* This means you must consult your GP/Consultant/Practice Nurse)

Kidney failure is a terminal illness that has no cure. The treatment, such as dialysis and transplantation, is difficult and expensive.

Having kidney failure is devastating for both the patient and his/her family. It affects patients in many ways: physically, psychologically, socially and financially. There is a massive impact on the patient's quality of life and their life span.

Patients may have to have a form of dialysis that requires them to go into hospital three times a week for up to 5-6 hours at a time, and this treatment can be very difficult and may leave patients feeling exhausted. Patients have to stick to a very restrictive diet: some are not allowed many fruits and vegetables, coffee, spices, and their fluid intake is usually no more than 1 litre per day.

Dialysis treatment costs the NHS around £30,000 per patient per year.

Patients can feel very depressed because of this long-term chronic illness. It can affect their ability to study, work, travel abroad, and often affects their fertility; many things that most of us take for granted.

Although kidney disease is a disease of older age, it can and does affect people, men, women and children of all ages. The problem is set to worsen as the relatively young Asian population ages.

The tragedy is that some of this kidney disease is preventable; or could at least be delayed through early detection and correct management.

by Neerja Jain

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A REAL LIFE STORY

Damini Vasavda (pictured overleaf on the extreme left) is 67 years old and was diagnosed with diabetes almost 20 years ago, in 1986. She has been successfully managing her diabetes during this time. You can see how she does this by watching her on our DVD "Preventing Kidney Disease: the silent killer affecting you". However, we outline here some of the positive lifestyle changes she knew she had to make in order to keep her and her kidneys healthy.....

- Damini takes regular exercise: walking for 20 minutes every day. She also does yoga.

- Damini eats a well balanced healthy diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables. She makes her food with very little olive oil and a pinch of salt only. She rarely has fried foods and desserts only occasionally.

- Damini ensures she visits her GP at least twice a year for a check up of her diabetes and her kidneys. She also keeps appointments at the Hospital to see the Diabetes Specialist and monitors her test results.

- Damini says: "Look after yourselves by taking exercise and meals as advised by your doctor. Keep positive. If I can do it, so can you!"



Dr Farooqi, GP says: "Well done Damini, you have proved a healthy lifestyle is achievable and the DVD shows it can be fun too".

Here is Damini, pictured on the extreme left, with other members of the ABLVD DVD project team at the launch of the DVD. Back row: (Left to right) Dr Azhar Farooqi OBE, Purnima Chavda, Peer Educator, Rajiv Popat, Producer, DVD. Middle row (Left to right): Davinder Nagra, Community Development worker, Abida Hussain, Peer Educator, Reshma Bharakada, Youth worker. Front row: Damini Vasavda, case study and featured on DVD; Neerja Jain, ABLVD Project Manager, Meeta Madhani, Public Health Development Specialist.

Funding has been obtained for six ABLVD research projects. The sites include Birmingham, London, and Leicester. The objectives of ABLVD are:

1. To highlight the incidence of chronic kidney disease (CKD) in Minority Ethnic groups.

2. To reduce the incidence of CKD amongst such groups, and

3. Where it cannot be avoided, to ensure early referral, optimal treatment, and equality of access to dialysis and transplantation.

It is being done through programmes of education to both community and health professional groups. This is being done in partnership with local patient, community and health care professional groups. We have already secured over £1million for the first phase of this project but require much more to continue with this ground breaking and much needed work that has not been addressed before.

Results from the first two completed ABLVD projects:

a) West London project led by Dr Liz Lightstone, Imperial College, London.

The kidney function of South Asians is deteriorating at a much faster rate than that of the white community, leading them to develop irreversible and potentially terminal kidney failure.

The research finding is the world's first indicator of 'faster' deterioration rates and Kidney Research UK now wishes to carry out a further 3 year project which will determine why this is the case and what are the key causes.

b) Leicester project led by Professor John Feehally and Dr Azhar Farooqi.

Analysis from the research has indicated lack of knowledge regarding the cause of kidney disease. There is also confusion about risk factors for kidney impairment even amongst those at highest risk – that is, those with diabetes and high blood pressure.

The research also indicated that visual educational materials and a personalised educational approach were preferred. So, the "Peer Educator" initiative, training lay community people in kidney health promotion has been developed.

A media programme and concerted community educational programme was instituted. We developed and used specially produced information cards and a DVD, both in 6 languages.

Follow up research was done to assess the impact of the interventions. The DVD has been extremely well received by community and professional groups with recorded feedback. The Peer Educators have successfully given presentations, utilising the resources, to audiences from the diverse religious groups of the local South Asian community, reaching thousands of individuals.





Purnima Chavda, a Peer Educator at a health fair in Leicester

Excellent feedback including written comments have been received.

Analysis of the research reveals that our approach has led to increased awareness, and indicates that some positive lifestyle modification is taking place.

In conclusion, innovative methods of promoting education and awareness about kidney health and kidney disease in South Asian communities have been developed.

The key messages and our educational approach are applicable not only to other South Asian communities in the UK, but also to other groups at high risk of CKD anywhere in the UK.

FIND OUT MORE:

Resources, literature, and educational Materials available from Kidney Research UK:



- Kidney Research UK has generic information leaflets on kidney health and aspects of the illness – in English and suitable for the general public.
- Kidney Health advice in a concertina style information card aimed at South Asian communities – available in 5 South Asian languages and English
- A multi-lingual DVD focusing on the South Asian communities, entitled, “Preventing Kidney Disease: the silent killer affecting you”.
- The information cards and the DVD are available in Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu.

If you would like any of these, please contact us at.

www.kidneyresearchuk.org/able

or contact 0845 300 1499 (local rate) /email

info@kidneyresearchuk.org

or contact Neerja Jain, ABLE Development Manager on 0121 244 0272.

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