



# National Kidney Month

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**  
Mary Hiller, NKFM  
[mhiller@nkfm.org](mailto:mhiller@nkfm.org)  
734-222-9800, ext. 216

## **The stark connection between obesity and chronic kidney disease**

The National Kidney Foundation of Michigan educates Michiganders  
during National Kidney Month this March

**ANN ARBOR, MICH. – (Feb. 16, 2017)** – More than 900,000 Michigan adults have chronic kidney disease (CKD) and most don't know it. This March, the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan will honor National Kidney Month by educating Michiganders about the harmful consequences of obesity and its association with kidney disease, and advocating for healthy lifestyles.

The kidneys are the body's chemical factories, filtering waste and performing vital functions that control things like red blood cell production and blood pressure. But over time, the kidneys can become damaged with little or no physical symptoms to warn you that your kidneys are in trouble.

According to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan has one of the highest obesity rates in the nation – 32 percent of adults and 17 percent of youth are obese. Obesity is defined as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that may impair health. People who are overweight or obese have a greater chance of developing diabetes or high blood pressure, which are the leading causes of kidney disease and kidney failure. Also, people who are overweight or obese are two to seven times more likely to develop ESRD compared to those of normal weight.

While obesity leads to CKD indirectly through type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease, it can also cause direct kidney damage by increasing the workload of the kidneys.

"Obesity is a growing epidemic in Michigan and can be destructive to one's health," said Dr. Art Franke, chief science officer at the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan. "Because 70 percent of all kidney disease cases can be prevented, we must get at the root of the problem. That's why during National Kidney Month the NKFM is encouraging people to practice healthful habits to live a healthier life."

The good news is that obesity, as well as CKD, can be prevented. Follow these four steps to get started.

- 1. Maintain a healthy diet.** Focus on eating smaller portions and drinking water rather than sugary drinks. Choose low-sodium options; Eat fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables; Try healthier variations of your comfort food or high-calorie recipes.
- 2. Engage in regular exercise.** Physical activity is essential for healthy weight reduction. Your goal should be to be active for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise every week. This can include brisk walking, running, swimming, biking or dancing. The National Kidney Foundation of Michigan offers [Enhance Fitness](#) workshops in communities across Michigan designed for adults to improve functional fitness and well-being.

3. **Get an annual physical examination.** Talk with your doctor about your risk factors for kidney disease, and ask to get tested for kidney disease. You can also talk to your doctor about a weight loss program that is right for you.
4. **Prevent/manage diabetes and high blood pressure.** Keep your blood pressure below in the normal range (or the target your doctor establishes) and stay in your target blood sugar range as much as possible.

Throughout National Kidney Month, the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan is offering resources, community events, and more! On March 9, 2016, join the world-wide celebration of World Kidney Day by wearing orange and sharing your photos on social media with @KidneyMI. To find a local program or event near you, or to learn more about the risk factors for kidney disease, visit [www.nkfm.org/KidneyMonth](http://www.nkfm.org/KidneyMonth).

#### **Kidney Disease Facts:**

- 26 million American adults (age 20+) have chronic kidney disease.
- More than 900,000 Michigan adults (age 20+) have chronic kidney disease.
- Individuals with diabetes and high blood pressure are at higher risk for developing chronic kidney disease, as well as older individuals, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and Arab Americans.
- Kidney disease costs American taxpayers nearly \$100 billion every year.
- As the incidence of obesity in children increases, so does the rate of type 2 diabetes, which is a leading cause of kidney failure. One in three kids born in 2000 will develop diabetes.
- More than 2,800 people were waiting for a lifesaving kidney transplant in Michigan on February 1, 2017.
- African Americans are nearly 3.5 times more likely to develop kidney failure from diabetes than Caucasians.

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#### **About the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan:**

*The mission of the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan is to prevent kidney disease and improve the quality of life for those living with it. The NKFM is widely known for providing more programs and services to more people than any other region or state. The organization is recognized for its success in sound fiscal management by receiving a 4-star rating, for the last nine years in a row, from Charity Navigator—the nation's leading charity evaluator.*