



Clean Up Your Act!

High populations in Singapore have suffered from kidney diseases related to uncontrolled diabetes. Many have also ended up with renal dialysis to sustain their lives. Yet this could have been prevented if they had taken charge of their health in the first place, say Chionh Lay Keng and Shirley Esther Ong, Diabetes Nurse Educators, Diabetic Society of Singapore.

Our kidneys are a pair of bean-shaped organs in the back of the body, which are made up of millions of tiny blood vessels responsible for filtering waste products in the blood. If the kidneys do not remove the waste products, they will build up and accumulate toxins in the blood, hence 'poisoning' the whole body.

High blood glucose level, high blood pressure and smoking can cause high levels of stress to the kidneys and damage the 'filtering system' in the kidneys. Often, many people experience no symptoms till the later stages, when they start to experience water retention in the body, shortness of breath, poor appetite, vomiting, lethargy and fatigue.

In our role as diabetes nurse educators, we have encountered many patients who are aware that poor glycaemic control can lead to kidney diseases. Patients who suffer from end-stage renal failure require dialysis in two modes. They could select either haemodialysis (three times a week for four to five hours in each session) in the satellite centre or hospital, or home peritoneal dialysis (four to five cycles every day on a strict regimen). It is not only

a very painful physical experience but also a great financial and emotional burden.

Here's how you can prevent kidney disease:

- Tight blood glucose and blood pressure control
- Medications as prescribed by your doctor to achieve good blood pressure levels
- A low salt diet
- Stop smoking
- Regular exercise
- Diet control (low protein diet as instructed by your dietitian)

Annual screening for microalbuminuria (protein in the urine) should be performed for early detection. You could request such a test from your doctor or you could make an appointment with Diabetic Society of Singapore.

For more information, please contact the Diabetic Society of Singapore or call your doctor for more information.

References:

<http://www.nkfs.org> <http://www.diabetes.org> <http://kidney.niddk.nih.gov>