



Facts and Fiction about Chronic Kidney Disease

Learning about Chronic Kidney Disease, or CKD, is easy—or is it?

After all, information is everywhere. You can pick up your phone, computer, or tablet for an internet search. You can scroll through YouTube, Facebook, or Instagram. Well-intentioned loved ones or friends may give you advice that they have gathered from books, TV, and other places. With all the information, you may feel overwhelmed, especially if the information conflicts or is “too good to be true.” First, consider the source of the information. Is it truly reliable? Be careful. Not everything you read on the internet is true. Don’t be fooled. There is a lot of misleading or incorrect information out there.

At Dallas Nephrology Associates (DNA), we know that there is a lot of information that is easily accessible. Some is accurate and some is not. Can you tell the difference between facts and fiction when it comes to CKD?

I don’t need to worry about CKD. I feel fine. **FICTION**

FACT: Most patients with CKD don’t know they have it.

When the disease is mild, there are very few symptoms.

Only when CKD is severe do the symptoms appear. You may notice tiredness, swelling in feet and hands, shortness of breath, or changes in your urine. Routine testing is the only way to be sure if you have CKD or if your CKD is stable, getting worse, or getting better.

Kidney disease is rare and doesn’t affect people like me. After all, I’m too young to have kidney disease. **FICTION**

FACT: You may be surprised to learn that kidney disease is very common. One in seven American adults is living with kidney disease, and most don’t know it. Many factors increase your risk. High blood pressure and diabetes are at the top of the list, especially if not well controlled. A family history of kidney failure and being over age 60 also put you at risk. Other risk factors include ethnicity, with a higher risk in people who are African American/ Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, or Pacific Islander. Millions of Americans are at risk!



Testing for CKD is complicated and requires time away from work and family. Plus, it hurts!

FICTION

FACT: Testing for CKD is simple and includes a blood test and a urine test or urinalysis. The blood test is a common test that checks for Creatinine and Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR). These tests tell you how well your kidneys are working. You want a lower creatinine and higher GFR. The urine test looks for changes in the urine, like too much protein or abnormal blood cells. Both can be done at a doctor's visit. If you are at risk, make sure your doctor is checking these two tests. It's a simple process that can provide you with peace of mind.

If I drink more water and eat better, I will cure my CKD. FICTION

FACT: Although healthy nutritional habits benefit the body, they will NOT cure CKD. Unfortunately, there is no cure for CKD, but managing your fluid intake and adopting healthy eating habits can help slow down its progression and better manage medical problems such as diabetes and hypertension.

If you are at risk for kidney disease, there is nothing you can do about it. FICTION

FACT: Not everyone who is at risk will get kidney disease. You can help protect your kidneys. Eat healthy and exercise. Control blood pressure and blood sugar. Keep a healthy weight. Quit smoking, and do not overuse pain meds like Advil or Aleve. These steps can keep your kidneys healthy and lessen your chance of getting kidney disease. By making these healthy choices, you are taking control of your health and reducing your risk of CKD.

Vitamins, supplements, and herbs are all good for my body as long as they are all-natural.

FICTION

FACT: For most people, a healthy diet provides all the vitamins and minerals your body needs. Our kidneys will keep the nutrients the body needs and discard what it doesn't need, including unneeded vitamins, minerals, herbs, and supplements. When the kidneys are damaged, they cannot eliminate the excess supplements, which can build up in the blood. This buildup can be dangerous to organs such as the heart and liver. Before taking any over-the-counter medications, talk to your doctor to see if they are safe. This understanding can help you make informed decisions about your health.

Let your doctor and healthcare team be the "truth teller" by answering your health-related questions.



Because I have CKD, my kidneys will eventually fail. FICTION

FACT: Not all CKD is the same. There are different degrees of severity or stages. There are five stages of CKD, with stage 1 being mild and stage 5 being kidney failure. Most patients will not need dialysis or a transplant unless they progress to stage 5 or kidney failure. Everyone is different, and each person's outcome is different as well. To preserve your kidney function, start by being an advocate. If you are having a problem, talk to your doctor and ask questions. Follow your physician's plan, including taking medications as prescribed and making healthy lifestyle changes (decreasing salt in your diet, stopping smoking, and limiting alcohol). At Dallas Nephrology Associates, we are a team with the primary goal of preserving your kidney function.

EMPOWER YOURSELF WITH KIDNEY KNOWLEDGE

At DNA, we believe in the power of patient education. Navigating kidney disease can be difficult, confusing, and stressful. However, when you equip yourself with reliable information, this journey becomes more manageable.

Everyone is different, so we provide various education options tailored to your needs. Here are two of our most popular choices:

The **CKD and Me™** group class is designed to empower all patients with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) to better understand the disease and how to keep the kidneys healthy. We also include tips on getting the most out of your doctor's visit.

My Kidneys. My Options. My Life.® workshops are taught individually in a one-on-one session with one of our physician educators. Six workshops are available, covering topics such as the tools needed to slow down or halt the progression of kidney disease, identifying possible complications, taking an in-depth look at transplantation and dialysis, exploring the meaning of advanced care planning, and learning strategies for living well with kidney disease.

DNA recognizes that education is an essential component of your treatment plan. If you need more information, you can ask your physician or nurse which educational program works best for you. You can also visit our website at www.dneph.com/resources/patient-education-program/ Don't delay! Get started today.

DNA OPTIMAL HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS: Advanced Practice Providers

To serve your healthcare needs efficiently at Dallas Nephrology Associates, our offices provide you with a dedicated healthcare team of nephrologists and Advanced Practice Providers, including Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants. This ensures you receive optimal healthcare promptly.

During your initial visit at DNA, a nephrologist will lead the consultation. Subsequent follow-up appointments will be overseen by either a physician or one of our Advanced Practice Providers, working in tandem with the physician to deliver superior care.

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As a part of their responsibilities at DNA, Advanced Practice Providers:

- Collaborate with nephrologists to ensure top-notch healthcare.
- Receive specialized training under the guidance of nephrologists.
- Take the time to listen to the worries and concerns of you and your family.
- Explain the details of your health issues, medications, and other relevant topics to enhance your understanding of self-care.
- Provide personalized care.
- Conduct medical examinations, treatments, and procedures.
- Order and interpret laboratory and diagnostic tests.
- Prescribe and adjust medications as needed.

Learn more about the nephrologists, Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants at your DNA office by visiting www.dneph.com/providers/. or scan the QR code below with your smartphone:



Resources for Continued Learning

You can find our previous patient newsletters featuring additional educational topics, such as nutrition, lab test results, etc. by scanning the QR code below or visiting our website.



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Let's Talk About
Kidneys 
PODCAST



Sandra M. Lauriat, MD, FACP
Nephrologist / Director of CKD Education

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Kidney Care Excellence Since 1971

Dr. Sandra M. Lauriat, MD, Nephrologist, and Director of CKD Education, talks about the importance of educating patients to make better choices.

Scan the QR code to the right with your smartphone to view Let's Talk About Kidneys' podcast titled "How Education Can Improve the Outcomes of Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease" now!



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