

## **Facts About Chronic Kidney Disease and African Americans**

### **What is chronic kidney disease?**

Chronic kidney disease is a progressive condition that can damage the kidneys and prevent them from functioning effectively. More than 20 million Americans – or one in nine adults – are estimated to have chronic kidney disease, and another 20 million are at increased risk.

### **Who is at risk for chronic kidney disease?**

People at risk for chronic kidney disease include those with high blood pressure, diabetes, a family history of chronic kidney disease, diabetes or high blood pressure, as well as those over 65.

### **Are African Americans at higher risk?**

African Americans are more likely to have chronic kidney disease because they are at higher risk for two of the leading causes of the condition -- diabetes and high blood pressure -- than other ethnic groups.

Key facts show that:

- African Americans have the highest overall risk of chronic kidney disease and are four times more likely to develop kidney failure.
- 70 percent of African Americans with kidney failure have either diabetes or high blood pressure.
- 32 percent of people with kidney failure are African American yet African Americans represent 13 percent of the general population
- Kidney disease often progresses more quickly in African Americans and strikes this group earlier in life.

### **What are the symptoms of chronic kidney disease?**

Early symptoms associated with chronic kidney disease can be non-specific and subtle. When kidney function deteriorates, waste products, salt and fluids accumulate in the body and initially can result in the following symptoms:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Anemia-related weakness and fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Dry and itchy skin
- Difficulty concentrating

As the kidney function worsens, one may experience the following:

- Weight gain from excess fluids
- Swollen feet and ankles
- Puffiness around the eyes and high blood pressure
- Tiredness or fatigue, a symptom of anemia

**How is chronic kidney disease diagnosed, and is it treatable?**

Blood tests, urine tests and imaging tests are used to measure kidney function and to check for chronic kidney disease. Many people are unaware that they may be at increased risk for chronic kidney disease. Chronic kidney disease can, however, be managed if diagnosed early.

Information about chronic kidney disease and treatment can be found online at [www.KidneyResource.com](http://www.KidneyResource.com).