

Keep Your Kidneys Healthy

By Marilyn S. Radke, M.D.

Your kidneys are two bean-shaped, fist-sized organs located near the middle of your back, just below the rib cage. They filter waste and excess water from the blood, which leave the body as urine. Healthy kidneys keep the right balance of chemicals in the blood (sodium, phosphorus and potassium) that are needed to maintain good health.

Kidney disease results from damage to the nephrons, the tiny structures inside the kidneys that filter blood. If your kidneys are damaged, waste products build up in the blood and harm the body. Untreated kidney disease can cause the kidneys to stop working, or fail. A person with kidney failure must either begin kidney dialysis or get a kidney transplant to live.

Usually the damage occurs gradually over years in both kidneys, and there may be no symptoms until just before the kidneys fail. As kidney disease worsens, signs and symptoms may include:

- *Needing to urinate more often or less often,
- *Fatigue,
- *Itching,
- *Loss of appetite,
- *Nausea and vomiting,
- *Swelling or numbness of the hands or feet,
- *Drowsiness,
- *Trouble concentrating,
- *Darkening of the skin, and
- *Muscle cramps.

RISK FACTORS

People with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) are at high risk for early death, heart attack, stroke, hypertension, anemia, bone disease and malnutrition.

CKD risk factors include:

- *Diabetes-glucose (sugar) acts like a poison in the blood;

- *Hypertension-damages blood vessels in the kidneys;
- *Family history of kidney failure-mother, father, sister or brother had kidney failure;
- *Inherited factors-such as polycystic kidney disease;
- *trauma-a direct and forceful blow to the kidneys, and
- *Prolonged use of some over-the-counter painkillers that combine aspirin, acetaminophen and other medicines such as ibuprofen.

People over 65 are more than twice as likely to develop CKD as people between the ages of 45 and 65. The risk of kidney failure varies by race. Compared to whites, the risk of kidney failure is:

- *Increased for Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics,
- *Two times greater for Native Americans, and
- *Four times greater for African Americans.

TESTING

Early kidney disease has no symptoms, and testing is the only way to know if you have CKD. The National Kidney Foundation recommends three tests to screen for kidney disease:

1. Blood pressure measurement-normal is 120/80. People with kidney disease should keep their blood pressure below 130/80. If medication is needed, this should include an ACE (Angiotensin Converting Enzyme) inhibitor or ARB (Angiotensin Receptor Blocker) to protect kidney function.

2. Spot check (dipstick) for protein or albumin in the urine (proteinuria)-a chemically treated stick is dipped into a random sample of urine to see if protein is found.

3. Calculated glomerular filtration rate (GFR) based on a serum creatinine measurement (a simple blood test)-GFR measures how well the kidneys filter waste from the blood. Creatinine is a waste product that builds up in the blood when the kidneys do not function properly. The GFR equation uses creatinine level, age, (continued on page 2)

gender, race and weight to calculate the GFR.

If blood and urine tests show decreased kidney function, your doctor may request additional tests to identify the cause of the problem such as:

*Renal imaging (taking pictures of the kidneys)-using ultrasound, CT scan or MRI to look for unusual growths or blockages to urine flow; or

*Renal biopsy (examination of a tiny piece of kidney tissue under a microscope)-done in the hospital using a needle through the skin into the back of the kidney to retrieve a strand of tissue about three-quarters of an inch long.

STAGES

The stages of CKD are:

Increased risk of CKD: Normal GFR (90 or above) with risk factors;

Stage 1: Normal GFR with kidney damage;

Stage 2: Mildly decreased GFR (60 to 89);

Stage 3: Moderately decreased GFR (30 to 59) commonly with anemia and bone problems;

Stage 4: Severely decreased GFR (15 to 29); and

Stage 5: Kidney failure (GFR less than 15) requires dialysis or kidney transplant.

March is Kidney Month. The National Kidney Disease Education Program teaches about testing and treatment to prevent or slow kidney failure. Control your blood sugar and blood pressure to keep your kidneys healthy, and ask your doctor about testing for CKD.

This article used by permission of Dr. Marilyn S Radke and MS Margaret M. Carter, Editor, NARFE magazine, and is taken from the March 2007 issue of NARFE, pages 26-27. With grateful appreciation.

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If I could have a lifetime wish
A dream that would come true,
I'd pray to God with all my heart
For yesterday and you.
A thousand words won't bring you back,
I know because I've tried;
And neither will a thousand tears,
I know because I've cried.
You've left behind my broken heart,
And happy memories, too;
I never wanted memories,
I only wanted you. ---Anon

There are just two kinds of people on earth today,
Just two kinds of people, no more, I say;
Not the good and not the bad, for 'tis well understood
That the good are half bad, and the bad are half good.
No! The two kinds of people on earth, I mean,
Are the people who lift and the people who lean.
---Ella Wheeler Wilcox

No age or time of life, no position or circumstance, has a monopoly on success. Any age is the right age to *start doing!* ---Anon. Be willing to find joy in adversity. Metcalf
Love suffers long and is kind and does not behave itself unseemly

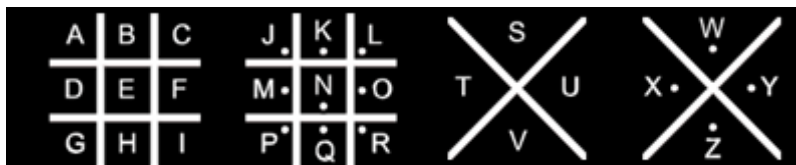
If a cluttered desk is the sign of a cluttered mind, what is the significance of a clean desk? ---L. J. Peter, Educator
To love what you do, and feel that it matters, how could anything else be more fun? ---Katherine Graham
Don't let your life be sterile. Be useful. Blaze a trail. Shine forth with the light of your faith and of your love. ---Jose Maria Escriva, Lawyer and cleric. Time gives good advice. ---Maltese proverb

CODES

A wide variety of codes affect our lives every day. Just consider: area codes, zip codes, bar codes, electrical codes, fire codes, ethical codes, source codes and the code of conduct for military personnel to name just a few. As you can imagine, the military and governments are intensely interested in codes and make much use of them. In times of war, if a military organization can break the code of a foreign military, a great advantage has been gained. The US was able to break the Japanese code during WWII and thereby gained a tremendous advantage over the Japanese.

The capture of the German Enigma code machine during World War II gave a significant advantage to the Allies during the war in Europe. The code you see below is said to

have been used during the Civil War between the North and the South. Which side used is not known. It is known as the Pigpen Grid. How easy do you think it could have been broken? Cryptography, the art of writing and deciphering messages in code, was in use during the Civil War, and if the Pigpen Grid was used, as seems likely, what you see immediately below is **Navy-Marine Corps MARS** encoded by the Pigpen Grid method. We know the telegraph was in use in the Civil War with coded messages sent by that means. There are several kinds of substitution codes that might have been used by telegraphy back then, but this Pigpen Code obviously would not have been one of them. *Source: The Signal Corps Association, 1860 - 1865*



Daylight Savings Time

Tim, NNN0XEE/NNN0AS FIVE MN

How many of you are aware that this year daylight savings time will start and end on different dates?

In an effort to increase energy conservation efforts, Congress, in late 2006, changed the start of Daylight Savings time to the second Sunday in March and the ending day will be the first Sunday in November.

Now, how many of you remember when you installed your Windows operating system that it asked you if you wanted it to automatically change the time when Daylight Savings time change rolled around? Well guess what – unless you have Windows XP installed and have kept current with your updates – your machine still thinks that Daylight Savings Time is going to start on the first Sunday in April and end on the last Sunday in October. Microsoft is not providing any automatic updates for Daylight Savings time for anything but Windows XP. For operating systems prior to Windows XP, users are going to have to manually change the date – and unless you have access to some of the right resources, changing the Daylight Savings Time requires editing the registry – a task that should not be undertaken by the faint of heart.

Microsoft has a thorough discussion of this issue, titled “**Preparing for daylight saving time changes in 2007**” located at:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/timezone/dst2007.msp>

Should you own a windows version prior to Windows XP, your best bet is to use the “tzedit” executable to update your installation of windows. The “tzedit.exe” file, where tzedit stands for “Time Zone edit” is a small program, about 32 kb, that you can run, follow the instructions, fill in the required information as required to update your machine. This executable file (extension .exe) is available at the URL above. Yes, you are going to have to download the executable file and run the file in order to update your computer. Some of you have firewalls, antivirus software, and all other kinds of protection installed on your machines that are going to have conniptions when you want to download the executable – your choice, if you want a relatively painless way to fix this issue you need this tool,

otherwise, as previously stated editing the correct registry entry (the important words here being *the correct registry entry*) to make this update is painstaking and not for the timid. One other thing to remember – don’t delete this little tool either – when someone decides that changing Daylight Savings Time didn’t yield the desired result and we all get to change it back – the same tool will be needed, so you may as well hold onto the program.

Please note, we really dislike publishing urls in the newsletter, reason being someone invariably types in the wrong address, through no fault of the contributor or editor – ie. user error, yet both the editor and contributor are blamed for inaccurate information, a broken link, etc.. We’ve provided the link above, but if you find it doesn’t work, just do a search in your favorite search engine (Google, Yahoo, etc.) using the criteria – “Windows Daylight Savings Time”. You will receive pages of links, review them and one of them should be to the Microsoft site, otherwise, feel free to pick the one that best fits your liking. There are other sites that offer up the tzedit tool, downloading from Microsoft gives you some level of comfort that the file is clean and will work. *Ed. Note: This very timely article was sent in the first of March by Tim, and should have been sent out right away. There just were not any other articles then to fill out the Newsletter.*

In India there is a religious sect that worships the goddess Kali. The ritual is simple, but moving. Every morning the people bring to the local temple an offering of a watermelon. After presenting the offering, they fall on their knees and chant the following: “Here’s another melon, Kali, baby.”

The good life exists only when you stop wanting a better one. It is the condition of savoring what is, rather than longing for what might be. The itch for things---so brilliantly injected by those who make and sell them---is in effect a virus draining the soul of contentment. A man never earns enough, a woman is never beautiful enough, clothes are never new enough, the house is never furnished enough, the food is never fancy enough.

There is a point at which salvation lies in stepping off the escalator, of saying, “Enough: What I have will do, what I make of it is up to me.”
---Marya Mannes

ANGER

The Padre's Pithy Portions of Pertinent Perceptions

Anger: "A feeling of displeasure resulting from injury, mistreatment, opposition...and usually showing itself in a desire to fight back at the supposed cause of this feeling. Anger is also broadly applicable to feelings of resentment or revengeful displeasure. **Indignation** implies righteous **anger** aroused by what seems unjust, mean, or insulting. **Rage** suggests a violent outburst of **anger** in which self-control is lost. **Fury** implies a frenzied rage that borders on madness. **Wrath** implies deep indignation expressing itself in a desire to punish or get revenge." ---Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition.

In Dr. S. I. McMillen's book, "*None Of These Diseases*," he, a medical doctor, discusses a number of things that lead to illness, injury and death. One of these is anger.

At one time two men worked in the same office and they did not like each other. Their animosity towards each other, of unknown origin, turned into open anger until one day it became rage. They were in their office and began arguing; it soon escalated into a blind rage. One of the men burst out of the office, went out to his car, got in and, so mad he couldn't see straight, drove out of the parking lot into the path of a cement truck. He was killed instantly. The other man remained in his office, pacing furiously until he collapsed on the floor, stricken by a stroke. He became bed-fast and had to be cared for the rest of his life.

Anger kills. It has killed many marriages, many friendships and many chances for promotion. Anger seriously affects one's health and in doing so it can seriously damage certain joints and bodily organs; it can cripple, it can prematurely age a person. In chapter five of the New Testament book Galatians, these are some of the acts of the sinful nature (of man) listed therein: "*Hatred,*

discord, fits of rage, dissension, wrath, strife." (Taken from the KJV and NIV).

In Ephesians 4:26, we read: "*Be angry, and sin not; do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.*"

An explanation is in order!

Anger is a very human and natural reaction. When we feel hurt, put upon, injustice, or that something or someone is blatantly unfair, anger, to some degree, is the usual response. We are created in the image and likeness of God. The Old Testament speaks about God's anger and, in the New Testament, we see anger manifested by Jesus. So, the **REACTION** of anger, in and of itself, is not the problem. It just paves the way for whatever **ACTION** we will take, and that's where the all-important element of **choice** comes in. Will we opt to retaliate, be vindictive, harbor a grudge, imprison ourselves amid impenetrable walls of unforgiveness? **OR** is there a higher, better, and more constructive path, a way to **channel** the emotion of anger to do some good?

In the famous Sermon on the Mount, the Lord makes some very lofty demands of us. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." WOW! What utterly impossible expectations He has laid down for us here! You might be thinking, "There is **no way** that any of us could do this in every situation throughout life," and you would be 100 per cent correct! Here, Jesus speaks of a way of life and of being that **only God** is capable of living; but the **good news** is that He very much would like to live this life in and through **us!** We must decide each day if we will allow Him to do so!

Where will you be when you get to where you are going? **Just remember** that we are not human beings going through a temporary spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings going through a temporary human experience.

This journey we are making from birth to death is a time of preparation for where we will spend eternity. In death we are set free from this body so we can move from this life, through the doorway death provides us, into our eternal abode. And we only have one of two choices about where we will spend eternity...

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Puerto Rico

Our Navy-Marine Corps MARS members in Puerto Rico (Rich Port) have a rich history going back to the fifteenth century when Taino Indians inhabited most of the island. Christopher Columbus discovered the island during his second voyage in 1493, and landed there on 19 November 1493. The Taino Indians made a big mistake when they showed him gold nuggets in the river and told him to take all he wanted. And he did! Let's look now at a brief history of Puerto Rico.

History In 1993, Puerto Rico celebrated the 500th anniversary of its discovery by Columbus. Settled by explorer Juan Ponce de Leon, the Island was a Spanish possession for over four centuries. Puerto Rico came under United States sovereignty by the Treaty of Paris signed on December 10, 1898, terminating the Spanish-American War. Puerto Ricans have been US citizens since 1917. In July 1950, the US Congress enacted Public Law 600. It provided that existing laws which defined the political, economic, and fiscal relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States should remain in full force. It also authorized Puerto Rico to draft and approve its own Constitution, which took effect on July 25, 1952. Puerto Rico's relationship with the US is referred to as commonwealth status.

Political Trends For many years there have been two major views in Puerto Rico with respect to the Island's relationship with the United States; one favoring commonwealth status and the other favoring statehood. A small group supports independence for Puerto Rico. Voters supporting a continuing relationship for Puerto Rico with the United States Mainland have dominated Island elections over the years.

Part of the USA Puerto Rico is part of the US. There are no travel restrictions to other US areas and no customs duties or quotas on shipments between Puerto Rico and the US Mainland. Products manufactured in Puerto Rico are "Made in the USA". The people of Puerto Rico do not vote in national elections. They are represented in Congress by a Resident Commissioner who has a voice in the House of Representatives but no vote. Most federal taxes are not levied in Puerto Rico. No federal income tax is collected from island residents on ordinary income, except in cases of Federal employees.

Geography Puerto Rico measures 100 miles by 35 miles with an area of 3,464 square miles. Topography varies from coastal flatlands to mountainous central highlands.

Climate Trade winds ensure year-round subtropical weather. The average temperature is 74 degrees F.; however, highland areas are cooler. Rainfall is abundant along the north coast and in the highlands, light along the south coast.

Population Puerto Rico has 3.6 million people - the great majority of which are US citizens. Today, Island residents live in substantial middle-class circumstances, characterized by modern urban services and amenities. About 2.7 million Puerto Ricans also reside on the US Mainland. *Source: Courtesy of The Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce South Florida.*

No horse gets anywhere until he is harnessed. No steam or gas drives anything until it is confined. No Niagara is ever turned into light and power until it is tunneled. No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated, disciplined.

---Harry Emerson Fosdick

A man has three names: the name he inherits, the name his parents give him, and the name he makes for himself.

---Anon

A pint of example is worth a gallon of advice.

---Anon

A reputation may be repaired, but people always keep their eyes on the place where the crack is.

---Anon

A smile is the lighting system of the face and the heating system of the heart.

---Anon

A wise man among the ignorant is as a beautiful woman in the company of blind men.

---Saadi

Age is a question of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.

---Sachel Paige

A winner is someone who recognizes his God-given talents, works his tail off to develop them into skills and uses them to accomplish his goals.

---Larry Bird

And in the end it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.

---Abraham Lincoln

A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes.

---Hugh Downs

Watch your thoughts, for they become words.

Watch your words, for they become actions.

Watch your actions, for they become habits.

Watch your habits, for they become character.

Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.

---Anon

Being Tested For Colon Cancer

A friend with whom I served in the military came down with colon cancer a few years ago. The diagnosis surprised him for he had never had any indication that there was anything wrong. But then he had not had previous tests for colorectal cancer; he had never had a colonoscopy. That was a big mistake, and he's been paying for this oversight ever since.

In having a colonoscopy, this procedure isn't bad at all. Each time I've had it they put me out and I never had any discomfort during or afterward. It is the drinking of a gallon of the prescribed fluid beforehand that puts some people off going for a colonoscopy.

To be honest, the drinking of that gallon of fluid is not the most pleasant thing you might do. The first time I did it I thought I would never be able to drink it all down. But I did. And you can, too. For the first test I simply poured the fluid out into a glass and had at it, making a wry face!

For the second test I took 10 plastic drinking cups, filled them with ice, poured the fluid from the gallon container into the ten cups, and let the fluid chill for a bit. Then I began drinking. I would drink all of one cup and wait a bit. Then drink down another cup---down through all ten drinking cups. Then I'd refill all the cups, adding ice as necessary, wait a bit and have at it again. By this time I could see that the fluid level in the gallon container had gone down enough for me to be encouraged, and the iced fluid was far easier to drink down than when it was at room temperature.

It took two and a half hours to completely drain that gallon container. I was in no hurry! And I had the time in which to do it. And the worst part of this entire procedure was over! The rest of this procedure was a breeze.

While you're laying on the table, all comfortable and waiting for what is to follow, a soft needle is inserted in a vein in the back of your hand. The nurse is very attentive; she inquires about your comfort while adjusting a drip attached to the soft needle.

During this procedure the doctor comes by and he wants to know if you are comfortable and if you're feeling alright. He explains what he'll be doing and asks if you have any questions. If there are, he tries to answer them as satisfactorily as he can; then turns and says he'll be right back. You say, "OK..." and the next thing you know it is all over! You're through! And as the nurse says she is going to take the needle out, the doctor comes by, all smiles and says

that everything is great; there are no problems, no polyps, and you can go home as soon as you're dressed!

You're probably somewhat amazed right now for you don't remember fading out. There's no pain, not even any discomfort. The realization that you're OK and can go home right away is wonderful news. So you get dressed and head for home after being told you don't have to come back for about ten years.

While you were out of it, the doctor, using a probe, was able to see clearly up inside your colon. He was looking for polyps and any abnormalities. Had there been any polyps, he would have removed these hidden growths before they could become cancerous.

Had there been cancer in your colon in its earliest, most treatable stage, colorectal cancer has a 90 percent survival rate! So, you see, being tested for colorectal cancer can save your life. To shy away from being tested because of that gallon of fluid you must take (In spite of some doctors allowing easier options, my doctors always insisted on my drinking that gallon of fluid), and end up with colon cancer, is to end up far, far worse off than drinking a gallon of fluid.

My friend who avoided being tested for colorectal cancer has been paying an awesome price for his neglect. Once it was detected, he went through painful surgery, had a large section of his colon removed, had to wear a colostomy bag to receive waste products from his colon, and had to undergo chemotherapy for a while, and then radiation treatments. He did not enjoy either of these, but he had no choice. His life was at stake.

Eventually his shortened colon was re-connected. Then he found out real quick that he had to wear Depends, and he is wearing them to this day. Radiation and chemotherapy saved his life, but at some cost. These treatments, good as they are for treating cancer, create side effects, and my friend is trying to deal with those.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Weigh carefully which you'd rather do: Drink a gallon of fluid necessary to completely clean out your colon so the doctor can see inside it and take preventative and remedial measures or undergo painful surgery, wear a colostomy bag, take chemotherapy and/or radiation treatments, and maybe end up wearing Depends. See your doctor and discuss with him your need to undergo a colonoscopy. It's the better choice!