Kidney Health for All - 10th Anniversary of World Kidney Day

On Thursday 12th March 2015, the 10th anniversary of World Kidney Day, the UK’s leading kidney charities are uniting to raise awareness of kidney disease. Recent surveys have highlighted the astonishing lack of awareness amongst the public of what their kidneys do, and the charities are calling for urgent action to prevent and treat this serious health condition.

Over two million people in the UK are already suffering from moderate to severe kidney disease (CKD), but it is estimated a further one million people have kidney damage without knowing it. However, depending on the problem, early diagnosis and treatment can help slow down any further damage to the kidneys. Left unchecked, unfortunately CKD can lead to kidney failure which requires treatment by dialysis or a kidney transplant.

There are many causes of CKD, high blood pressure and diabetes being the most common. Some people inherit genetic defects which cause CKD, for example polycystic kidney disease. There are little or no symptoms in the early stages and even when symptoms do appear at more advanced stages, they are not specific with patients feeling generally tired and unwell.

The theme for World Kidney Day 2015 is Kidney Health for All, and two recently published surveys have highlighted why it is so vital to improve people’s knowledge about the important job our kidneys do:

- An Ipsos MORI survey of over 2,000 people published in January 2015 by ‘Think Kidneys’, reported that only 17% of those surveyed knew that high blood pressure was a risk factor for kidney disease, and half were unaware that the kidneys make urine.'

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More recently, Kidney Research UK commissioned a UKGov poll, which revealed a startling three quarters (74%) of the 2,000 people polled having limited or no knowledge of kidney disease, its causes or its symptoms. Despite a fifth (21%) confirming they suffered with diabetes, high blood pressure or vascular disease – three of the leading causes of kidney failure - only 6% considered themselves to be at risk of kidney disease².

Professor John Feehally, a leading kidney specialist and one of the founders of World Kidney Day globally, said: “These surveys show an astonishing lack of awareness of the kidneys and what they do. It’s very worrying to see these results - they show why ‘Kidney Health for All’ is such an important theme for World Kidney Day this year. Kidney health is not at the forefront of the public’s mind, but our kidneys are vital and they must be given proper attention and kept healthy”.

World Kidney Day is celebrated worldwide, bringing together millions of people in over 150 countries and uniting them to produce a powerful voice for kidney health awareness. Every year, countless local and national events are organised by kidney charities, the renal and transplant community, and individuals to draw public attention to the importance of kidney health - what can be done to protect kidneys before disease strikes, and to assist patients who already have chronic kidney disease.

On World Kidney Day, please help us to raise awareness.
Together we might just help save a life!

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¹Think Kidneys is the NHS campaign to improve the care of people at risk of, or with, acute kidney injury which is run as a collaboration between NHS England and the UK Renal Registry. The Ipsos MORI survey was carried out between 4th-14th July 2014 amongst 2005 residents in Great Britain aged 15yrs and over. The aim was to understand the level of knowledge amongst the general public about their kidneys and what they do, to help develop the communications strategy for the Think Kidneys programme and provide a baseline against which they can potentially measure the impact of the programme in the future.

²YouGov Plc. Total sample size 2161 adults. Fieldwork undertaken between 9th - 12th January 2015. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+)
For further info, please contact: pressoffice@kidneyresearchuk.org or telephone the Press Office: 01733 367 860 or out of hours: 07733 103 830

About World Kidney Day:
World Kidney Day is an annual global awareness and education event which started in 2006, and is held on the second Thursday in March. The theme for 2015 is Kidney Health for All. The campaign in the UK is led by the Kidney Charities Together group comprising of five leading kidney charities:

The British Kidney Patient Association www.britishkidney-pa.co.uk
Kidney Research UK www.kidneyresearchuk.org
Kids Kidney Research www.kidskidneyresearch.org
National Kidney Federation www.kidney.org.uk
The Polycystic Kidney Disease Charity www.pkdccharity.org.uk

The 2015 World Kidney Day campaign in the UK is also supported by a charitable donation from Baxter Health Ltd.

Think Kidneys: www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk

Kidney Facts:
- Our kidneys filter around 180 litres of blood every day.
- Kidney disease can affect anyone but is more common in older people.
- Chronic kidney disease is common, affecting over 3 million people in the UK. However, it can go undetected as people often have no symptoms.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities are five times more likely to experience kidney failure than other groups.
- Acute Kidney Injury (AKI) is a sudden reduction in kidney function. It is not a physical injury to the kidney and usually occurs without symptoms. AKI affects over half a million people every year in England, and accounts for 5-15% of all hospital admissions.
- Currently there is no cure available for people with end stage kidney failure. The only treatments are dialysis, a transplant or conservative care.
- Every year over 55,000 people in the UK are being treated for end stage kidney failure.
- A staggering 6,000 people, that's around 90% of the total organ waiting list, are waiting for a kidney, yet less than 3,000 transplants are carried out each year and one person dies every day in the UK waiting for a kidney.

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A selection of initiatives Kidney Charities Together are involved with for World Kidney Day 2015:

**The British Kidney Patient Association** will be raising awareness of a range of projects supporting greater action to prevent and treat kidney disease. This will include its work with the Royal College of General Practitioners developing a clinical priority programme for chronic kidney disease and improvements in primary care; supporting the launch of the new kidney health website [www.healthtalk.org/kidney-health](http://www.healthtalk.org/kidney-health); and of course cheering on all those individuals across the UK who are using the day to raise funds for the charity.

**Kidney Research UK** is encouraging their supporters to ‘Go Purple’ and hold a wide range of purple-themed events around World Kidney Day, raising vital funds for the charity’s life-saving research into kidney disease. In addition they hope people will share a picture on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram of what they #couldntlivewithout to help raise awareness of kidney disease throughout March.

**Kids Kidney Research** will be supporting World Kidney Day this year online via their website, Facebook and Twitter feeds. Watch these spaces for some exciting news in the field of kidney research.

The 55 Kidney Patient Associations (KPAs) around the UK that form the NKF (National Kidney Federation) will all be putting on World Kidney Day activities to raise public awareness at each of their own renal units. The actress Nina Wadia (Eastenders) will be joining in at West Byfleet renal unit. In the lead up to 12th March, the charity is also encouraging people to take a selfie with their kidney-related message and post onto Facebook and Twitter.

**The PKD Charity** activities for World Kidney Day focus on the **£20 Challenge**. From quizzes, purple and green mufti days, a writer’s challenge through to cake sales and sporting events; the charity gives people £20 and you choose how you’d like to grow that £20 into something bigger! There are also a number of groups making and selling kidney-shaped cookies, using the charity’s specially designed cutter.