

8 March 2017

Take control of your kidney health

This World Kidney Day, Thursday 9 March, South West Sydney Local Health District is highlighting the link between the nation's obesity epidemic and chronic medical conditions, including kidney disease.

Director of Renal Services Dr Tim Spicer said that with over half of all south western Sydney residents either overweight or obese, World Kidney Day is an important reminder that diet and exercise are key to keeping you and your kidneys healthy.

"Kidney related disease kills more people each year than breast cancer, prostate cancer and even road traffic accidents but up to 90 per cent of kidney function can be lost before you feel sick," said Dr Spicer

An estimated 1.7 million Australians aged 18 years and over already have at least one clinical sign of existing chronic kidney disease and one third of cases potentially relate to being overweight or obese.

"Our kidneys produce hormones, absorb minerals in our body, filter blood and produce urine and being overweight or obese means they need to work harder to get rid of toxins," said Dr Spicer.

"Being overweight increases your risk of developing kidney disease by 1.5 times and being obese doubles it."

The good news is that obesity, like chronic kidney disease, is largely preventable. Education and awareness of the risks of obesity and a healthy lifestyle, including proper nutrition and exercise, can dramatically help in preventing obesity and kidney disease.

"Kidneys are the most vital filtering system in our bodies and like any filtering system, what goes into them matters," said Dr Spicer.

"Reducing your salt and sugar intake, quitting smoking and making water your drink of choice are significant factors in keeping kidneys healthy."

If detected early, kidney disease can be managed through medications and dietary and lifestyle changes.

Kidney failure can be fatal and requires regular dialysis treatments and/or a kidney transplant to stay alive.

For more information on kidney disease, visit Kidney Health Australia at www.kidney.org.au