



BC Renal Agency

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

BACKGROUND

The Kidney Disease Epidemic

- An estimated 145,000 people in BC have some degree of kidney disease. The prevalence of this potentially life threatening chronic illness is approaching that of Type II diabetes, yet only a small percentage of individuals are diagnosed or screened for associated conditions.
- Kidneys are as important to your health as your heart and lungs. Once the kidneys fail, patients require dialysis or a transplant to stay alive. Outcomes for patients on dialysis remain poor, with a per year mortality rate of 10% and an overall five-year survival rate that is worse than that of all cancers except lung.
- As many as 30% of people with diabetes also suffer from kidney disease.
- The number of people with end-stage kidney disease requiring dialysis is growing at 8-10 percent per year
- Because home hemodialysis costs much less than traditional hospital-based dialysis, the overall costs savings for dialysis in BC this year are expected to be \$1.2 million. Additional savings are realized because patients on independent dialysis have fewer ER visits and hospital stays.

Risk Factors for Kidney Disease

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Family history of kidney disease
- Heart disease
- Individuals belonging to specific high-risk ethnic groups (First Nations, Asian, South Asian, Hispanic African American and Pacific Islanders)

Kidney Disease and Kidney Failure

Kidneys are an essential part of the body's waste removal system, and work primarily to rid the blood of excess water and acid as cleansing it of wastes produced through food intake and metabolic function. Kidneys can fail suddenly due to trauma or critical illness, but more commonly kidney failure is caused by a chronic condition such as diabetes or high blood pressure. If kidney disease is diagnosed early, certain lifestyle and dietary changes, along with medications, may slow the progression of the disease and prevent complications in other body systems. However, if the kidney function continues to deteriorate to the point of failure, dialysis or transplantation are necessary for survival.