



**BC Renal
Agency**

An agency of the Provincial
Health Services Authority



The Best Place on Earth



The foundation
of kidney care.

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Kelowna Renal Community Celebrates World Kidney Day, March 13, 2008

March 13, 2008 is a day of international celebration and education, with renal communities worldwide raising awareness of the kidneys' vital role in the maintenance of good health.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is one of the fastest growing epidemics of the western world with one in 10 people affected.

"In British Columbia up to 145,000 people have this life-threatening condition and most people don't even know it," says B.C. Minister of Health George Abbott. "World Kidney Day helps remind all British Columbians that early detection of CKD helps prevent or delay serious health measures up to and including life-saving dialysis and kidney transplants."

Known as the body's master chemist, kidneys remove wastes from the body (by filtering over 200L of blood a day), regulate the levels of water and minerals in the body and produce hormones that control important body functions. If kidneys stop functioning, the body can't survive, and dialysis is required.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada, BC Branch, is partnering with the BC Renal Agency, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, on a range of activities throughout March -from media releases to a kidney quiz to promotional articles in partner newsletters. The partners are also challenging renal programs to celebrate World Kidney Day through such events as a morning or lunchtime "walk around the hospital/community dialysis unit" with as many staff/patients/volunteers as possible.

Some of the activities taking place in Kelowna on March 13th are:

- 10:00 am – 2:00 pm: **Kelowna General Hospital** – in the lobby, volunteers hand out buttons saying "*Are Your Kidneys OK?*"
- 12:00 noon: **Kelowna General Hospital**– Members of the Renal Team, wearing WKD T-shirts, participate in a Walk for Kidney Health around the block outside the hospital at noon to promote the importance of exercise to maintain good kidney health.

-MORE-

Backgrounder

Are Your Kidneys OK?

Test your knowledge of kidney disease by filling out the quiz posted throughout Kidney Month at www.bcrenalagency.ca. or www.kidney.bc.ca . At the end of March, random draws will be made and prizes awarded.

What are some of the symptoms to look for?

In the early stages of kidney disease, many individuals experience no symptoms. However, common early symptoms of kidney disease include: foamy or bloody urine; a frequent need to urinate at night; headaches; and puffy eyes or ankles.

Why is there a Kidney Month?

While patients with kidney disease in British Columbia have some of the best outcomes in the country and a broad range of care options, early diagnosis and treatment are essential to achieve the best patient outcomes, as changes to diet or medication can slow or even stop the progress of kidney disease.

During the March Drive...

More than 8,000 Kidney Foundation volunteers will canvass homes across BC to raise awareness and funds for research and patient programs.

Where can I find out more about World Kidney Day?

www.worldkidneyday.org

Where can I learn more about kidney disease?

www.bcrenalagency.ca

www.kidney.bc.ca

The BC Renal Agency (www.bcrenalagency.ca) and the Kidney Foundation of Canada, BC Branch (www.kidney.bc.ca) are good sources of information for patients and their families. The BC Renal Agency has also created a new DVD that can be played in English, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Punjabi and Tagalog and is available free to anyone who requests a copy on a first-come, first-served basis. The focus of the DVD is on patients who tell their own stories about their experiences in dealing positively with kidney disease.