

Kidney health



with **Fiona Kane**
Informed Health

World Kidney Day is on 9 March 2017. It is a global awareness campaign aimed at raising awareness of the importance of our kidneys for good health.

So why are kidneys important? Here is some of what they do:

- Make urine
- Remove toxins/wastes and extra fluid from your blood
- Control your body's chemical balance
- Control blood levels of many minerals including sodium and potassium, controlling blood acidity and blood pressure
- Help keep your bones healthy
- Help you make red blood cells.

How do you know if you are at risk of kidney disease?

Diabetes and high blood pressure are key risk factors for Chronic Kidney Disease. If you have one or more of these risk factors it is advised that you have regular kidney checks (ask your GP):

- you have diabetes
- you have high blood pressure (hypertension)
- you are obese
- one of your parents or other family members suffers from kidney disease
- you are of African, Asian, or Aboriginal origin.

Here are some tips to reduce the risk of developing kidney disease

1. Move your body and keep fit: Keeping fit helps to reduce your blood pressure, reducing the risk of Kidney Disease. Movement is also important to control your blood sugar levels, keep your muscles and bones strong enough to carry your body, eliminate toxins from your body and encourage a healthy heart and healthy circulation.
2. Control your blood sugar levels: About half of people who have diabetes develop kidney damage, so it is important for people with diabetes to monitor their kidney function. Refer to the dietary tips at the end of this article.
3. Monitor and manage your blood pressure: We all know that high blood pressure can lead to a stroke or heart attack but did you know that it is also the most common cause of kidney damage?
4. Manage your stress: Stress contributes to high blood pressure, inflammation, insulin resistance and cardiovascular disease.
5. Keep well hydrated: Consuming plenty of fluid (approx. 2 litres a day) helps the kidneys clear sodium, urea and toxins from the body which, in turn, results in a significantly lower risk of developing chronic kidney disease, according to researchers in Australia and Canada. Your needs may be higher (closer to 3 litres) depending on size, age, sex, climate, exercise, existing kidney

stones etc.

6. Don't smoke: Smoking reduces blood flow to the kidneys, impairing their ability to function properly. Smoking also increases the risk of kidney cancer by about 50%.
7. Be aware of the risk of over the counter medications and get advice from your Doctor and Pharmacist: Common drugs such non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen are known to cause kidney damage and disease if taken regularly such as in cases of chronic pain.
8. Manage your bladder health: If you have a tendency towards cystitis (urinary tract infections), please seek medical help. Untreated, the bacteria can move to your kidneys causing a serious kidney infection.

How to eat to support kidney health

To manage blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes risks it is important to eat a balance of protein, good fats and colourful vegies. Don't avoid fat, just stick to eating real foods. Fresh (not tinned) beetroot is very good for lowering blood pressure. Reduce caffeine and reduce packaged

foods, particularly those high in sugar and salt. The recommended sodium intake is 5-6 grams of salt per day (around a teaspoon). The recommended intake for sugar is no more than 6

teaspoons per day (24g). High amounts of sugar in the diet can lead to inflammation, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and insulin resistance which can all contribute to diabetes, kidney disease, obesity and dementia.

Foods to include:

Avocados, cold pressed extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil, real butter, ghee, oily fish, eggs, grass fed beef, chicken, walnuts, sunflower seeds, pepitas, fresh beetroot, celery, onion, garlic, seasoning herbs, loads of greens and blueberries. Eat full fat dairy, eg full fat Greek Yoghurt, full fat milk, real full fat mayonnaise.

What to avoid:

Reduce packaged foods high in refined carbohydrates and sugar (muffins, biscuits, cakes, pies, ready-made meals, confectionary etc). Reduce bread, pasta, potatoes, corn and rice. Avoid margarines and vegetable oils like canola and sunflower oil. Any product containing trans-fats, hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils. Avoid low fat products (eg low fat milk, yoghurt, dressings, mayonnaise etc), low fat usually means high sugar. The fat is beneficial for health, the sugar is detrimental to health. Just eat real food!

When you eat a healthy diet and manage your weight, this can help prevent diabetes, heart disease and other conditions associated with Chronic Kidney Disease.

If you are concerned about your kidneys, if you have urinary tract infections that don't clear or if you have dark urine, please see a doctor immediately. By the time you get symptoms, there may already be considerable damage to your kidneys so if in doubt, always seek medical attention.

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CONCERNED ABOUT CROOKED OR OVERLAPPING TEETH?



by **Dr Faris**
Riverlands Dental

A question we often get asked is 'can I get something done to change the appearance of my front teeth?' This may be due to the

positioning, colour or shape of the front teeth. In this article we will address the position of the teeth.

The position of the teeth are important in that they can cause functional problems such as difficulty in cleaning if there is crowding.

They may also make us prone to biting our lip or cheek if they are out of position. Visually, teeth which are out of alignment can dominate or interfere with our smile. All these factors may cause us to be self-conscious when we smile. As a result, we may have wanted to get something done to address crooked or overlapping front teeth.

The options to address these issues has been either move teeth with braces or have veneers placed on the teeth. A barrier to getting this done has been the perceived time involved to get the tooth movement and how much this may interfere with our busy lifestyle.

Conversely, sometimes placing veneers may not be the most conservative way to change the position of the teeth.

Modern technologies such as 3D digital imaging of teeth allow us to visualise what the current position of your teeth is and what the end point to treatment would be. This allows both the dentist and patient to get an idea of the goal of treatment and the time it would take. Along with the benefit of digital preview, the aim to carry out this

treatment in as short a time as safely and effectively possible has meant some of these concerns can be addressed. The time taken can be a few months rather than 2-3 years it would have taken.

Digital planning coupled with other modern addition

called clear aligners (Invisalign) can result in a very aesthetic way to move teeth. The alternative is use ceramic brackets and tooth coloured wires (Smilefast) to move teeth in a more traditional manner. The first step is to have an assessment to see if you are suitable for this treatment, once that is determined then we can discuss the various options which are available.

If you would like to find out more information then please call us at Riverlands Dental on 4571 2230 or visit us at www.riverlandsdental.com.au for further information.



Know you need to make a diet or lifestyle change but not sure where to start?

Confused by mixed messages about what foods to eat?

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