

MEDIA RELEASE

INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS FOUR TIMES MORE LIKELY TO DIE OF KIDNEY DISEASE

Indigenous Australians asked to visit Aboriginal Medical Centre this Kidney Health Week

One in five Indigenous Australians are likely to have indicators of chronic kidney disease and are four times more likely to die with it, yet the vast majority do not know they are at increased risk, according to Australia's leading kidney health organisation.

For **Kidney Health Week (8-14 April 2019)** Kidney Health Australia is asking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to visit their local Aboriginal Medical Centre to complete simple tests - blood, urine and blood pressure - to see if they are at risk of developing chronic kidney disease.

Kidney Health Australia CEO, Chris Forbes, explained that while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent less than 2.5 percent of the national population, they account for approximately eleven percent of people commencing kidney replacement therapy each year and the incidence of end-stage kidney disease for Indigenous peoples in remote areas of Australia is 18 to 20 times higher than that of comparable non-Indigenous peoples.

"Raising awareness is the key focus of this year's Kidney Health Week. A lack of awareness is an issue across the entire population, but it is especially concerning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults, especially those in remote communities, where access to services, education and tertiary level treatments such as dialysis is limited," he says.

Kidney Health Australia Clinical Director, Associate Professor, Shilpa Jesudason, described Australians at risk of developing chronic kidney disease as those who have diabetes, high blood pressure, established heart problems, have had a previous stroke, a family history of kidney failure, are obese, smoke, have a history of acute kidney injury, are 60+ years or, are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

"Kidney disease is often called a 'silent killer' because you can lose up to 90% of your kidney function before experiencing any symptoms," explains Associate Professor Jesudason.

"Talking to community and family is a very important way of passing on the message about kidney disease.

"Kidney Health Australia will continue to represent the voice of Australians affected by kidney disease and is actively contributing to kidney health advancement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a major current program of culturally-safe consultation with Indigenous communities across Australia, community engagement and strategic partnership," she says.

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- An estimated 59,600 adults of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin (1 in 5) are living with biomedical markers of CKD
- 18% of the adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population 18 years and over has indicators of chronic kidney disease (CKD)
- 9 out of 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with kidney disease are unaware
- The greater prevalence of CKD in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is due to the high incidence of risk factors including diabetes, high blood pressure and smoking, in addition to increased levels of inadequate nutrition, streptococcal throat and skin infection and poor living conditions
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are four times more likely to have indicators of Stage 4-5 CKD and develop end-stage kidney disease
- The incidence of end-stage kidney disease for Indigenous peoples in remote areas of Australia is 18-20 times higher than that of comparable non-Indigenous peoples
- For Indigenous Australians, the estimated proportion of the population with signs of CKD in the Northern Territory is almost double the national average (32.4 per cent versus 17.9 per cent)
- For Indigenous Australians, Queensland and New South Wales account for over half of the estimated burden of people with signs of CKD
- Indigenous adults living in remote areas are more than twice as likely as those in non-remote areas to have signs of CKD (34 per cent compared with 13 per cent)

For further information about kidney health in Indigenous Australians log onto: <http://kidney.org.au/advocacy/guidance-and-tools/indigenous-health/overview-539>

Hashtags: #iKidneyCheck #KHW19



About Kidney Health Australia

Kidney Health Australia, formerly the Australian Kidney Foundation, is a national healthcare charity and peak body with a vision to save and improve the lives of Australians affected by kidney disease.

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For media enquiries, please contact:

Annie Konieczny

AKON Communications

M: 0409 929 239

E: annie@akoncomms.com