



Media Release

World Kidney Day Kidney Disease and Children Better Knowledge. Better Care.

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Quality water supply around Australia is a major national health asset according to Kidney Health Australia which is highlighting water – nature’s drink - as the drink of choice for children on World Kidney Day (March 10 2016).

Anne Wilson CEO and Managing Director of Kidney Health Australia said, ‘the **KIDNEY DISEASE AND CHILDREN, BETTER KNOWLEDGE, BETTER CARE** education campaign highlights to both children and parents the importance of choosing water over sugar laden drinks, healthy food and physical activity daily.’

‘Any child drinking a 600ml bottle of soft drink consumes sixteen teaspoons of sugar. As a regular behaviour, this raises major health concerns and exposures to health problems including high risk factors for chronic kidney disease.’

The high quality of Australia’s water system makes water – nature’s drink - accessible in homes and throughout the community. Water bottles have become a common visible lifestyle item for people adopting a healthy lifestyle.

‘Our challenge is to overcome the impact of the multimillion dollar advertising barrage aimed at increasing children and teenagers’ consumption of soft drinks,’ Ms Wilson said.

In a joint national communique for 2016 World Kidney Day, Chairman of the Australian and New Zealand Paediatric Nephrology Association Dr Joshua Kausman and Managing Director of Kidney Health Australia Anne Wilson said there is a need to improve kidney health knowledge, patient care and also to reduce risk factors.

Dr Kausman said, ‘Obesity and high blood pressure are major risks for the development of many health complications in adulthood including kidney disease, but often have their origins in childhood.’

‘It is a priority to enable children to develop sustainable health promoting lifestyles early in life to help prevent chronic disease later in life.’

Anne Wilson said the Australian community and the Australian health system is facing major challenges given that around **90% of the 1.7 million Australians who have indicators of chronic kidney disease are largely unaware they have a potentially life threatening disease.**

Educating children and their parents about kidney health and chronic kidney disease prevention is vital because if kidney disease can be detected early and managed appropriately, then the otherwise inevitable deterioration in kidney function can be reduced by as much as 50% and may even be reversible.

Kidney Health Australia has released ***Kidney Disease and Children, Better Knowledge, Better Care*** national schools' resources to every school in Australia from Kidney Health Australia's website www.kidney.org.au

Billy the Kidney, the big red cuddly ambassador for Kidney Health Australia is popular with children. Billy is spearheading the national education and awareness campaign.

The resources are suitable for children aged from five to sixteen with a range of activities, from colouring and drawing to engage five to eight year olds, to teaching resources and activities that expose the risks of sugar in drinks and foods for older students. The resources are aimed at teaching and promoting healthy life skills including choosing healthy food options.

Kidney Fast Facts

One in three adult Australians is at an increased risk of developing chronic kidney disease. You are at risk if you have diabetes, high blood pressure, established heart problems (heart failure or heart attack) and/or have had a stroke, a family history of kidney failure, are obese, smoke, are aged 60 years or older, are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, or have a history of acute kidney injury.

Approximately 1.7 million Australians, (1 in 10) aged 18 years and over, have indicators of chronic kidney disease such as reduced kidney function and/or the presence of albumin in the urine **and around 90% of these are unaware they have this condition.**

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