



Guy's and St Thomas'
NHS Foundation Trust

Preventing Kidney Disease in African, Caribbean and Asian Communities





If you are of African, Caribbean or Asian descent then you are more likely to develop high blood pressure and diabetes than the rest of the UK population*.

If untreated, this can lead to heart attacks, strokes and chronic kidney disease.

WHAT is chronic kidney disease?

This is when the kidneys are not working properly. Chronic means it is long term and likely to last for the rest of your life. It may remain mild, but in some people it may progress to kidney failure requiring treatment in the form of dialysis or a kidney transplant.

The aim of this leaflet is to tell you about the steps you can take to stay healthy and reduce your risks of heart attack, stroke and chronic kidney disease.

WHAT is blood pressure and WHY is it important?

Your heart pumps blood around your body through blood vessels called arteries. Blood pressure is the pressure that your blood exerts on the artery walls.

If this pressure is too high it can damage the blood vessels. This in time can increase your chance of having a heart attack, stroke or kidney disease.



*Reference: www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/preventing-heart-disease/your-ethnicity-and-heart-disease

HOW do I know if I have high blood pressure?

High blood pressure does not usually cause any symptoms so the only way to know is to get it measured. You should aim for a blood pressure of 130 / 80 or below when measured by your GP or Practice Nurse.

Aim to get your blood pressure measured at least once a year by your GP or Practice Nurse especially if other family members have, or have had, high blood pressure.

HOW can I keep my blood pressure down?

- By healthy eating
- By reducing the salt in your diet
- By giving up smoking
- By not becoming overweight
- By taking regular exercise
- By reducing your alcohol intake.

WHAT is diabetes?

Diabetes is a life-long condition where the amount of sugar (or glucose) in the blood is too high because the body cannot use it properly.

The pancreas (an organ in your body) produces insulin to regulate blood sugar levels. In people with diabetes the pancreas and/or the insulin produced are not working properly and so the blood sugar levels become too high.

There are two main types of diabetes: Type 1 and Type 2.

In Type 1 diabetes no insulin is produced and glucose quickly rises in the blood. About 10 per cent of people with diabetes have Type 1. This has nothing to do with diet or lifestyle.

In Type 2 diabetes, the body doesn't make enough insulin, or the insulin doesn't work properly and glucose builds up in the blood. About 90 per cent of people with diabetes have Type 2. Up to 58 per cent of Type 2 diabetes cases can be delayed or prevented through a healthy lifestyle.

*Reference: www.diabetes.org.uk/Preventing-Type-2-diabetes/Diabetes-risk-factors/



Type 2 diabetes is two to four times more likely to occur in people of South Asian descent and African-Caribbean or Black African descent. It is a serious condition which, if not treated properly, can increase your chance of having a heart attack, stroke, eye problems or kidney disease*.

HOW do I know if I have diabetes?

Symptoms of undiagnosed diabetes can include:

- passing urine more often than usual, especially at night
- increased thirst
- unexplained weight loss
- slow healing of cuts and wounds
- extreme tiredness
- blurred vision.

If you have any of these symptoms, you should make an appointment with your GP, especially if other members of your family have, or have had, diabetes.



HOW can I reduce my risk of developing diabetes?

- By healthy eating
- By not becoming overweight
- By reducing the salt in your diet
- By taking regular exercise
- By giving up smoking
- By reducing your alcohol intake.



HOW can I reduce my risk of developing chronic kidney disease?

By following all of the advice in this leaflet. If you know that you have high blood pressure or diabetes you can greatly reduce your risk of heart attack, stroke and chronic kidney disease by getting your blood pressure and diabetes under control. This means aiming for a blood pressure of 130 / 80 or below when measured by your GP or Practice Nurse. If you are diabetic, aim for a blood glucose level between 5 and 7mmol/L before meals, and less than 11-12mmol/L two hours after food.

Your GP and community health care teams can help you to achieve this.



Further information:

Blood Pressure UK

Tel: 020 7882 6218

[www.bloodpressureuk.org.uk /AfricanCaribbean/Home](http://www.bloodpressureuk.org.uk/AfricanCaribbean/Home)

Diabetes UK

Tel: 0845 123 2399

www.diabetes.org.uk

NHS Blood and Transplant (organ donation)

Tel: 0117 975 7575

www.organdonation.nhs.uk

www.mykidney.org.uk

A website put together by kidney patients and clinicians. It aims to help people understand more about kidney disease and how to live with it.

Your kidneys, your health, a guide to living with early stage chronic kidney disease. Available on the mykidney website or from the kidney clinic at Guy's Hospital.

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk

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