



Next Steps for Protecting Kidney Health in Black Communities

Thank you for joining our recent webinar, *Protecting Black Health: Kidney Disease Prevention and Early Detection*. We're grateful for your engagement.

Black individuals in Canada are more likely to develop kidney disease, yet often face barriers to early detection and culturally appropriate care. If you have concerns about your kidney health or that of a loved one, we encourage you to self-advocate by speaking to a health care provider.

⚠️ Understand Your Risk Factors

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is more common and often more severe in Black communities. You can complete this 10 question assessment to check if you are at risk: [Kidney Foundation - Are You at Risk?](#). Major risk factors for developing CKD include:

- **High blood pressure (hypertension)** – leading cause of kidney damage. For more information: [I'm concerned I may have high blood pressure, what do I need to know? – Hypertension Canada](#)
 - **Type 2 diabetes** – can damage kidney blood vessels over time
 - **APOL1 gene variants** – more common in people of African ancestry; increase risk of kidney disease
 - **Lupus** – more common and more severe in Black women; can affect kidneys. For more information: <https://www.lupuscanada.org/>
 - **Family history** of kidney disease, diabetes, or hypertension
 - **Medications** – be very careful about taking non-prescription medications, particularly painkillers. It is wise to discuss all over-the-counter medications with a doctor or pharmacist before they are taken.
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🔔 Know the Signs of Kidney Disease

Early-stage kidney disease often has **no symptoms**. Watch for these warning signs, especially if you're at higher risk:

- Swelling in legs, ankles, or around the eyes
- Frequent urination (especially at night)
- Fatigue or trouble concentrating
- High blood pressure
- Foamy or dark-coloured urine
- Muscle cramps or poor appetite

Preventive Care Tips

Protecting your kidneys starts with healthy habits, like the following:

- Reduce foods high in fat, sugar, and salt. Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Stay physically active (aim for 30 min/day, most days).
- Avoid smoking and reduce alcohol intake.
- Drink water and stay hydrated.
- Manage diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.
- Talk to your health care provider about medications that may affect your kidneys.

Check out these resources on healthy eating on an African and/or Caribbean diet : 1) [Healthy Eating Tips for African & Caribbean Diets](#), 2) [Nourishing Our Roots: A Guide to Healthy Eating in Black African and Caribbean Communities](#).

Questions to Ask Your Doctor or Nurse Practitioner

1. “Should I be screened for kidney disease based on my family history or background?”
 2. “How can I reduce my risk or slow disease progression if my results are abnormal?”
 3. “Are there medications I should avoid that could harm my kidneys?”
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Important Tests for Kidney Health

- **Blood pressure check at the pharmacy** – high blood pressure is a major risk factor
 - **Blood glucose or A1C test** – screens for diabetes, another major cause of CKD
 - **Urine albumin-to-creatinine ratio (uACR)** – detects protein in the urine, an early sign of kidney damage
 - **Serum creatinine and eGFR test** – measures how well your kidneys are filtering
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After a Diagnosis: What's Next?



You can act early to slow or even stop the disease from progressing.

- **Work with your care team:** This may include a family doctor or nurse practitioner, a kidney specialist (nephrologist), and a dietitian.
- **Get support:** Connect with the **Kidney Foundation of Canada's peer support** program for emotional and practical help. Visit [Kidney Foundation - Support](#) or call 1 866 390-PEER (7337).
- **Take medications as prescribed:** These may help control blood pressure, diabetes, or protect kidney function.
- **Make lifestyle changes:** Stay active, lower salt, manage stress, and follow a kidney-friendly diet. Here are some resources on **diabetic** and **kidney-friendly** eating on an African or Caribbean diet : 1) [Enjoy African and Caribbean food when you're living with CKD | Kidney Care UK](#), 2) [Caribbean Kidney Diet Essentials Guide](#), 3) [African, Caribbean and South Asian cuisines | NHS Diabetes](#) 4) [Ulockfood.ca/Diabetes/Caribbean-and-African-d.aspx](#)

💡 You Can Help Shape the Future of Kidney Care

Research may sound like something only scientists do in labs, but it's about asking questions and testing ideas to improve health care. In kidney research, this means finding better ways to prevent, detect, and treat CKD. But to make real change, research has to reflect the needs of real people—and that includes Black communities.

Your experience, your story, and your voice can help make research more **inclusive**, **culturally relevant**, and **life changing**. You can join a research team as a partner (not a subject) and share your lived experience to guide questions that matter to your community through the [Can-SOLVE CKD Network](#).

Organizations Supporting Black and/or Kidney Health

[Kidney Foundation of Canada \(KFOC\)](#) – Resources and support for patients and families.

[Can-SOLVE CKD Network](#) – National research partnership improving kidney care.

[Black Health Alliance \(BHA\)](#) – Advancing health equity for Black communities.

[Caribbean African Regenerative Medicine \(CARM\)](#) – Improving care and support for Black communities in regenerative medicine and similar health care-related fields.

[Canadian Donation and Transplantation Research Program \(CDTRP\)](#) – Driving advances in Canadian donation and transplantation research.