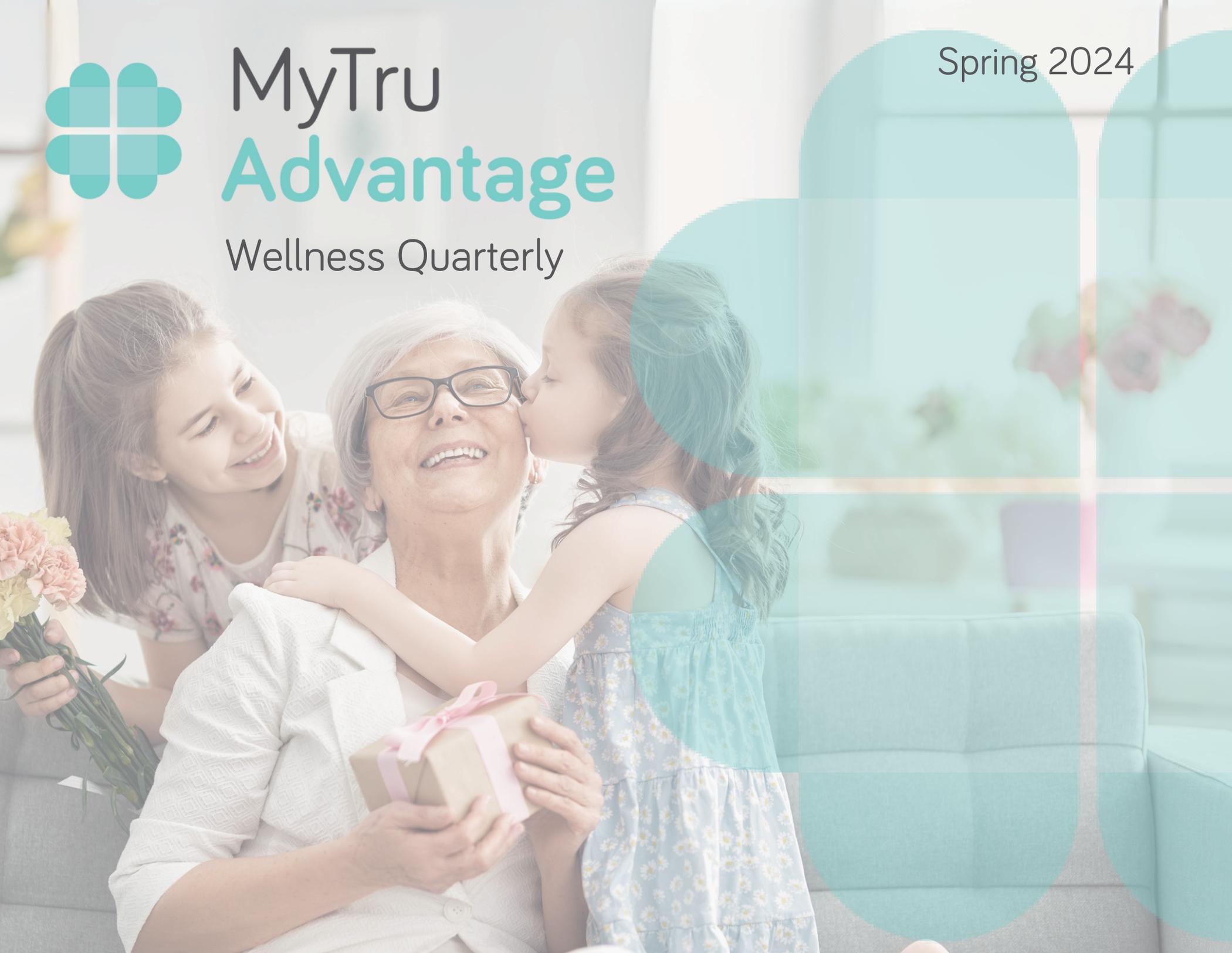




MyTru Advantage

Wellness Quarterly

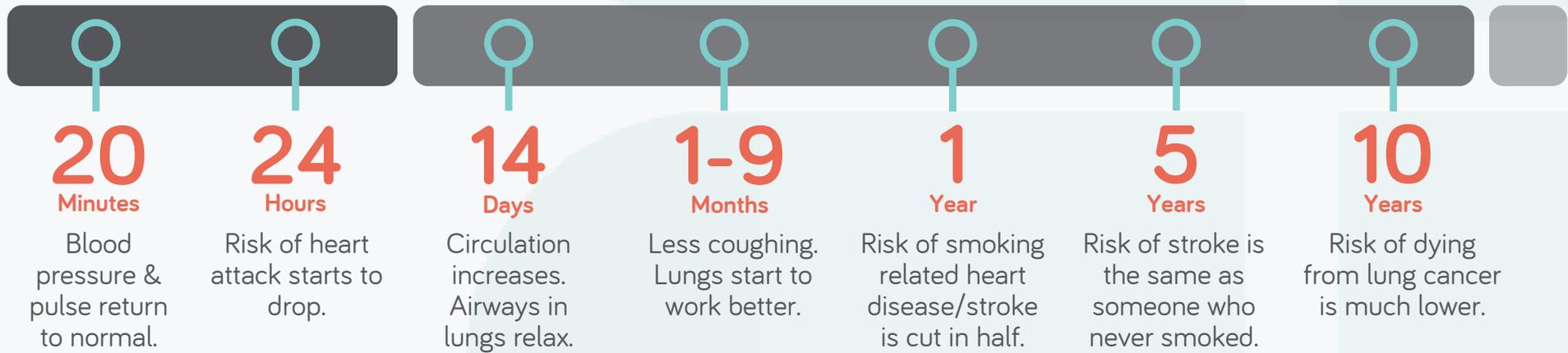
Spring 2024



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Tobacco Cessation

What happens when you quit?



What are the added benefits of nicotine cessation?

- The money you'll save.
- Your food will taste better.
- Your ability to smell will improve.
- The smell of your hair, clothes and breath will improve.
- You'll have less yellowing of your hair, teeth, and fingernails.
- You'll be less short of breath when being active (i.e. climbing stairs or light housework).
- You'll reduce damage to skin (wrinkles), and mouth (gum disease, and tooth loss).
- You won't have to leave smoke-free buildings just to have a smoke.

Nicotine can decrease blood supply and calcium absorption into the bones which can slow bone healing and weaken their structure.

Sources:

<https://wellnessinstitute.ca/smoking-cessation>
[https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/staying-healthy/smoking-and-musculoskeletal-health/#:~:text=The%20nicotine%20in%20cigarettes%20slows,develop%20fragile%20bones%20\(osteoporosis\)](https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/staying-healthy/smoking-and-musculoskeletal-health/#:~:text=The%20nicotine%20in%20cigarettes%20slows,develop%20fragile%20bones%20(osteoporosis))

Next steps for quitting

What is your reason for quitting?

Your family? Your health? To save money? When you know, write it down and post it somewhere you will see it every day. Remembering why you choose to quit will help when you are tempted to smoke, chew or vape.

Set your quit day.

Give yourself about a month. The best day to quit is a normal uneventful date. It may work better if your date isn't during an extra stressful time, i.e. the holidays, a vacation, etc.

Preparing to quit

- Evaluate your triggers. Determine when and what you're doing when using nicotine. Consider using a tracking log to write down the time of each cigarette/chew/vape and what you're doing at that time. You can see patterns and can better plan on how to avoid triggers (Examples: driving, after a meal, etc).
- Decide with your doctor if you should try a nicotine replacement (i.e. nicotine patches, gum, lozenges or maybe a prescription).
- Set your environment up for success. This means removing ashtrays, lighters, etc. Clean and air out your house and car to get rid of any smoky smells.
- Find a support system. Whether it's friends and family, a smoking cessation support group, or a quitting coach, it helps to have someone to talk to when you are struggling.

The cravings

- Understanding why cravings happen: nicotine is a drug that triggers the brain to make pleasure chemicals. Once you are no longer using nicotine, the brain notices the lack of nicotine and will send signals (cravings) to try and get more. This is withdrawal.
- How long will the cravings last? From the last use, it takes 3-4 days for nicotine to completely leave the body. During this time, the cravings will start and will be the strongest. Each craving lasts 10-20 minutes and then lightens up. While it will take your brain chemistry up to three months to return to normal, cravings begin to lessen in intensity and frequency after the first week and are gone completely in 1-3 months.

Dealing with the cravings

- Remind yourself what triggers your desire to smoke and remember your plan on how to handle it.
- Ask your support people for help when cravings hit.
- Remember your reason for quitting - if it's written down, read it a few times to remind yourself why this journey is so important.



Nicotine Cessation Checklist



- Go for a walk.
- Exercise - stress can be reduced.
- Take a short nap.
- Do some errands.
- Do a little house cleaning.
- Relax in a warm shower or bath.
- See your future, nicotine-free. Imagine how much better you'll feel once you stop.
- To keep your hands busy, play with a fidget tool/toy, do crafts and/or hobbies, etc.
- Use a straw, lollipop, chew gum, etc., to satisfy the hand to mouth and/or oral habit.

Other Resources:

1-800-QUITNOW
www.quit.com



Sources:

<https://www.quit.com>

<https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-tobacco/benefits-of-quitting-smoking-over-time.html>

Hypertension

What do Blood Pressure numbers tell us?

- Systolic (top number/larger number), - How much pressure is in your arteries when the heart beats. (pumps)
- Diastolic (bottom number), - How much pressure is in the arteries when the heart rests. (in between beats)

What do the numbers mean?

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (UPPER NUMBER)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (LOWER NUMBER)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	AND	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120-129	AND	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION STAGE 1)	130-139	AND	80-89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION STAGE 2)	140 OR HIGHER	AND	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (CONSULT DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY)	HIGHER THAN 180	AND/OR	HIGHER THAN 120

What are the symptoms of hypertension?

Many times, people with high blood pressure (HBP) have no symptoms at all; this is why hypertension is known as the silent killer. Even dangerously high blood pressure can have no symptoms.

Occasionally high blood pressure cause symptoms of:



Headaches



Shortness of breath



Nosebleeds

These symptoms normally don't happen until blood pressure is severe or life-threatening.



How does high blood pressure affect your health & quality of life?

High blood pressure causes damage to the walls of blood vessels because of the pressure it puts on them. Most of the time, the damage happens over time from unknown or untreated high blood pressure.

- Heart attack or stroke- hardening/thickening of the arteries prevents blood flow to heart or brain causing damage to tissue.
- Heart failure- high pressure in blood vessels makes the heart pump harder. That causes the walls of the heart to thicken. This leads to the heart not being able to pump enough blood to give the body what it needs.
- Kidney disease or failure- weakened and narrowed arteries in the kidneys keeps them from filtering the blood properly.
- Vision loss- Stress on the eye vessels caused by increased pressure leads to vision loss.
- Sexual dysfunction- erectile dysfunction happens in men with high blood pressure because of damage to the vessels. This same type of damage can lower libido in women.
- Memory trouble/Dementia- narrowed and blocked arteries limits the amount of blood flow to the brain which may cause trouble remembering and understanding concepts. Stroke from high blood pressure also causes this due to damage to brain tissue.

Sources:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/symptoms-causes/syc-20373410>

<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/health-threats-from-high-blood-pressure>

<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/changes-you-can-make-to-manage-high-blood-pressure/shaking-the-salt-habit-to-lower-high-blood-pressure>

So now what?

- Check your blood pressure regularly (as often as your doctor recommends).
- See your doctor yearly.
- Know your numbers (blood pressure, BMI, or waist circumference, cholesterol, and triglycerides).
- Start making lifestyle changes that help lower blood pressure.
 - Eat a well balanced diet high in fruits, veggies, and whole grains while low in fatty processed foods.
 - Reduce salt (sodium) in your diet– 2300 mg/day for most people and ideally 1500 mg/day for most adults, especially those who have high blood pressure. Read labels, including serving sizes, to figure out sodium.
 - Exercise at least 150 minutes/week of moderate cardio exercise, ideally divided 30 mins/day 5 days/week.
- Avoid nicotine (smoking/chewing/vaping) including second hand smoke.
- Limit alcohol consumption– men 1-2 drinks/day, women 0-1 drinks/day. 1 drink = 12 oz of beer, 5 oz of wine, 1.5 oz of hard liquor.
- Be sure to take any medications exactly as prescribed. Do not discontinue them suddenly or change your schedule without talking with your care provider.
- Advise your doctor right away about any side effects of your medication. Your doctor may be able to adjust your dosage or change medications to alleviate any side effects.
- Reduce stress and build a great support system.

The Importance of Sleep

In today's world, many of us slack in the sleep department.

Whether it be because we cannot get comfortable, our mind will not shut off, or we are burning the candle at both ends with late nights and early mornings, our sleep suffers.

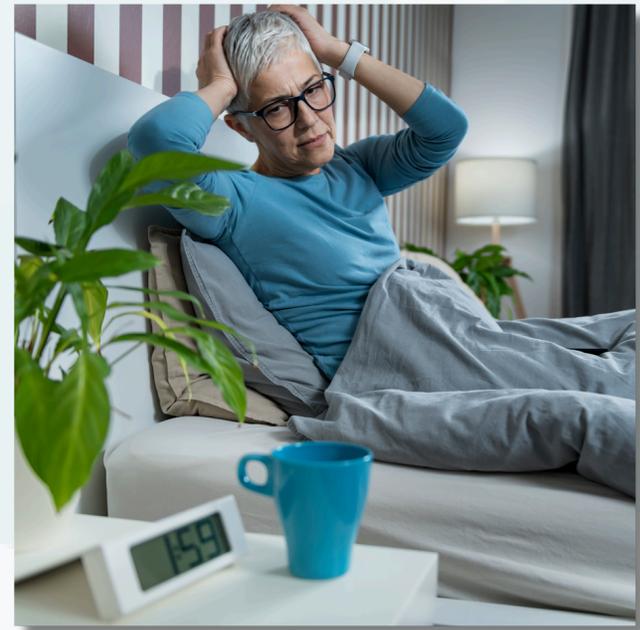
Why do we need sleep?

While you sleep, your brain is still working. Adults need 7-8 hours of sleep each night.

- This is the time when your brain prepares to learn, remember, and create.
- The brain has a drainage system that removes toxins during sleep. Some of these toxins are proteins that cause Alzheimer's disease. While sleeping, this drainage system works double time!
- Your entire body, even your immune system, uses sleep as a time for repair.

Insomnia

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder. People struggle to fall asleep or stay asleep, sometimes for weeks or months. This can cause many health issues if it goes on too long, such as headaches, weight gain, daytime sleepiness, diabetes, and heart problems.



Sleep Apnea

Do you wake up gasping for breath? Does your bed partner tell you that you snore or wake you up and tell you to breathe? You could have sleep apnea.

Obstructive sleep apnea happens when air cannot flow in or out of the nose or mouth, even though you are trying to breathe. Central sleep apnea happens when your brain fails to send the right signals to your muscles to make you breathe. Central sleep apnea is much more rare than obstructive sleep apnea.

Sleep apnea is very dangerous and must be addressed with your doctor as soon as possible.



Just a few of the health risks associated with sleep apnea include:

- Increased risk of cardiovascular events. (heart attack, stroke, atrial fib).
- Slowed metabolism. Sleep apnea can lead to weight gain. Many people lose weight without trying once their sleep apnea is treated.
- Increased risk of type 2 diabetes. Sleep apnea alone can cause elevated blood sugars.
- Shortened lifespan. Inadequate quality sleep hinders brain repair and regeneration.

Chronic Kidney Disease

What is Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)?

In America, there are 37 million adults who have CKD. There are millions of others at risk for getting CKD and are not even aware of it.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is when the kidneys slowly lose their ability to work correctly. They then aren't able to remove waste products from the blood, balance fluid levels, control red blood cell production, or make Vitamin D. CKD affects 1 in 7 American adults, but 90% of the people who have CKD are unaware that they have the condition.



What are the risk factors?

Diabetes is the biggest cause of CKD, with high blood pressure coming in second.

Other risk factors include:

- Family with a history of kidney failure
- Being a person of color, specifically: African American, Hispanic American, Asian/Pacific Islander and Indigenous North American

Sources:

<https://www.asn-online.org/worldkidneyday>

<https://www.kidney.org/atoz/content/about-chronic-kidney-disease>

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/15096-kidney-disease-chronic-kidney-disease>

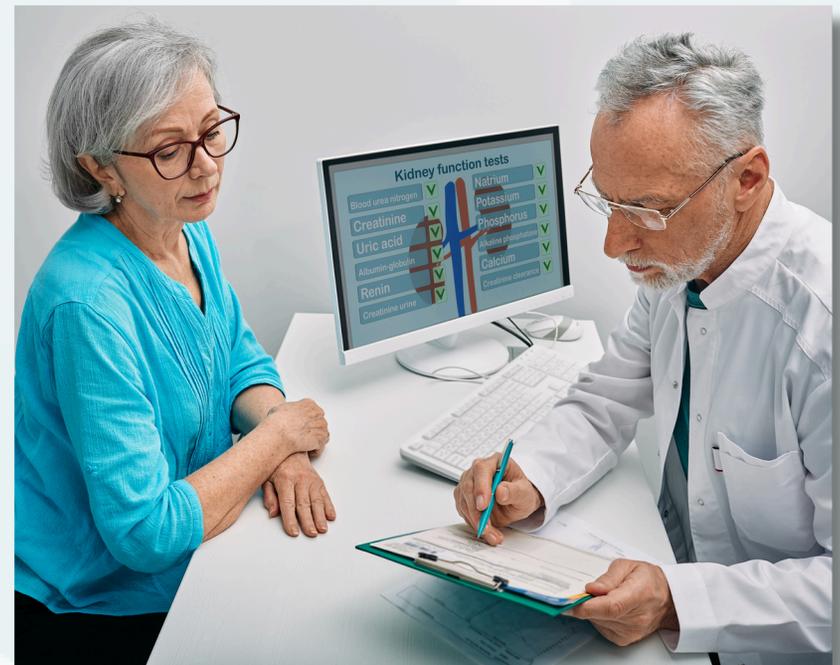
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Kidney disease statistics for the United States
Stanford Medicine News Center. Screening everyone 35 and older for chronic kidney disease would save lives.

Important things to know

Early diagnosis improves outcomes of CKD. Ask your doctor about recommended blood and urine tests at your next visit. One study suggests that screening everyone over the age of 35 is a cost-effective way to increase life expectancy.

How do you treat CKD?

- Follow your doctor's recommendations for medical care and lab tests.
- Manage chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension.
- Ask your provider about dietary guidelines such as the DASH or Mediterranean diet.
- Avoid painkillers, NSAIDs (Ibuprofen, Aleve) and other medications that can cause more damage to kidneys unless prescribed by your doctor, and ensure all providers know your medication list.
- Adhere to fluid intake instructions.
- Be sure to exercise regularly.
- Keep your weight in a healthy range.
- Avoid using nicotine products.



Sources:

<https://professional.heart.org/en/science-news/cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic-health-a-presidential-advisory>

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/kidney-disease#:~:text=Fast%20Facts%20on%20Kidney%20Disease,an%20estimated%2037%20million%20Americans.>

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/chronic-kidney-disease-ckd#:~:text=Chronic%20kidney%20disease%20means,family%20history%20of%20kidney%20failure.>

Contact Us

Member Services:

Phone: 1-844-425-4280 (TTY: 711)

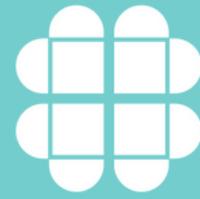
Email: MemberServices@MyTruAdvantage.com

- **October 1 – March 31: 7 days a week, 8:00am – 8:00pm, Local Time**

On Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, leave us a message and we'll return your call within 1 business day.

- **April 1 – September 30: Monday – Friday 8:00am – 8:00pm, Local Time**

On weekends and holidays, leave us a message and we'll return your call within 1 business day.



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