

Media statement

5 April 2019

Two minutes to avoid a silent killer

Kidney related disease kills more Australians each year than breast cancer, prostate cancer and road accidents combined, yet awareness of this silent killer remains low.

During **Kidney Health Week (March 8 to 14)** Gympie Hospital Renal Nurse Unit Manager, Deanne Mitchell, is urging everyone to see if they are at increased risk of developing chronic kidney disease.

“Early diagnosis and the correct management can often prevent kidney damage from becoming worse and reduce the risk of kidney failure. Sometimes the progress of the disease can be slowed by diet changes and medication,” Ms Mitchell said.

“Chronic kidney disease often has very few symptoms, or non-specific symptoms, such as tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea and generally feeling unwell. Many people can lose up to 90 per cent of their kidneys’ function before experiencing any symptoms, this is why it is often referred to as the silent killer.”

Australians at risk of developing chronic kidney disease include those who have diabetes, high blood pressure, established heart problems such as heart failure or heart attack, have had a previous stroke, a family history of kidney failure, are obese with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher, smoke, have a history of acute kidney injury, are 60+ years or are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

Ms Mitchell said: “Early detection will save lives. During Kidney Health Week we encourage everyone to who falls into a high-risk group, to get their kidneys checked by their general practitioner.”

Gympie Hospital Renal patient John Baker said he wishes he had been more aware of what a diagnosis of kidney disease meant.

“I was told my kidneys were functioning at about 80 percent, that didn’t sound so bad and I was feeling fine. In fact, when I received my diagnosis my kidney function had already been dramatically impacted, I hadn’t realised they were actually failing,” Mr Baker said.

“I am now on regular dialysis. I encourage everyone to ask their doctor if they should be tested, you can’t just rely on feeling unwell. Early diagnosis will give you the best chance of preventing further damage,” he said.

If you are not sure if you’re in a high-risk group you can take Kidney Health Australia’s online Kidney Risk Test, it takes a couple of minutes and could save your life.

Sunshine Coast

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To take the test to find out if you are at an increased risk of developing chronic kidney disease, and for more information on kidney health, visit www.kidney.org.au.

ENDS

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY:

Talk to kidney disease patient John Baker and Associate Clinical Nurse Consultant Jovitha Deborah.

When: Monday 8 April 12:30pm

Where: Gympie Hospital, meet at Main Reception

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