

The National Kidney Foundation of North Carolina

Leanne Skipper

The National Kidney Foundation of North Carolina (NKFNC) is committed to reducing the burden of chronic kidney disease (CKD) in North Carolina by preventing or delaying kidney disease from becoming kidney failure. The NKFNC provides access and education to individuals affected by CKD, launches public awareness initiatives designed to put a spotlight on the growing problem of CKD in North Carolina, and educates health care professionals about their critical role in detecting and managing CKD in their patient populations.

In April 2003, the National Kidney Foundation launched its Kidney Learning System (KLS) which focuses on education, early patient identification, prevention, and clinical applications that improve outcomes. KLS provides high-quality live programs, multimedia, and printed materials for physicians, allied health care professionals, CKD patients, those at increased risk, and the public. KLS materials are categorized by CKD stages along the continuum of care. This is consistent with the accepted medical classification of CKD.

The Kidney Learning System provides materials that focus on the following:

- Public awareness of risk factors such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and family history of kidney disease
- Awareness of the 5 stages of CKD and what can be done to treat CKD even in the early stages
- "How to" information for early identification and treatment
- Patient and family education and support for living better in any of the 5 stages
- How kidney transplant recipients fit into the 5 stages
- Education and support to health care professionals in every discipline and specialty who care for people who are at risk for CKD, patients in the early stages of CKD, patients in later stages, and kidney transplant recipients
- Tools for using evidence-based clinical practice guidelines and recommendations

To identify individuals at increased risk for kidney disease due to complications resulting from diabetes or high blood pressure, or who have first-degree relatives with hypertension, diabetes, or kidney disease, the National Kidney Foundation offers the Kidney Early Evaluation Program (KEEP). KEEP is a free kidney health screening program designed to raise awareness about kidney disease among high-risk individuals and to provide free testing and educational information so that kidney disease and its complications can be prevented or delayed.

The goals of KEEP are to:

- Raise awareness of kidney disease especially among "high-risk" individuals.
- Provide free testing for people at increased risk for kidney disease.

- Encourage people at risk to visit a doctor and follow the recommended treatment plan.
- Provide educational information so that at-risk individuals can prevent or delay kidney damage.
- Provide doctor referrals for follow-up care, if needed.
- Provide ongoing information and support.

Individuals should attend a KEEP screening if they are 18 years or older and have one or more of the following CKD risk factors:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- A parent, grandparent, brother, or sister with diabetes, high blood pressure, or kidney disease

One or more of these services will be provided at the screening:

- Blood pressure and weight measurements
- Blood and urine tests for signs of diabetes and kidney disease including:
 - Blood glucose test (to check blood sugar levels)
 - Hemoglobin blood test (to screen for anemia)
 - Urine dipstick test for pyuria (to detect white blood cell count in urine)
 - Urine dipstick test for hematuria (to detect red blood cell count in urine)
 - Albumin to creatinine ratio (to detect protein levels in urine)
 - Serum creatinine (to measure how well kidneys are filtering blood)
 - Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate (to test for overall kidney function)

Test results are provided on-site by a doctor or other qualified health professional.

Free educational materials are also available through KEEP.

Upon completion of the KEEP screening, the National Kidney Foundation will:

- Contact individuals with their results.
- With permission, send the results to the individual's doctor.
- Refer people with positive screens to a doctor or public health facility, if needed
- Provide additional information, education, and support.

The National Kidney Foundation of North Carolina believes that it is critical for the public to understand the risk factors for chronic kidney disease and to be proactive in their own health care to reduce their chances of being affected.

For more information visit the NKFNC at www.kidneync.org or visit the national Web site at www.kidney.org.

Leanne Skipper is the CEO of the National Kidney Foundation of North Carolina. She can be reached at [lskipper \(at\) nkfnc.org](mailto:lskipper@nkfnc.org).