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10 IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT KIDNEY DISEASE

1. About 20 million Americans have kidney disease. The number of people diagnosed with kidney disease has doubled each decade for the last two decades.
2. In 2001, approximately 486,000 Americans were suffering from End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD), about 400,000 of who are either on dialysis or require a kidney transplant.
3. Almost 60,000 ESRD patients die each year, making kidney disease America's ninth leading cause of death. In 2001, 287,494 U.S. residents with ESRD received dialysis.
4. Diabetes and hypertension (high blood pressure) are the number one and number two causes of kidney disease, respectively. Diabetes accounts for 35% of all new ESRD cases.
5. Dialysis is not a cure for kidney disease. This life-saving, blood-filtering process is also strenuous, expensive and comes with severe dietary and lifestyle restrictions.
6. ESRD is 4.45 times more likely to occur in African-Americans, 3.57 times more likely to occur in Native Americans, and 1.59 times more likely to occur in Asian Americans than in Caucasians.
7. In 1972, it was estimated that the Medicare ESRD program would cost \$250 million. However, today the program pays about \$14 billion, or 5.8% of its overall annual budget to support and treat ESRD patients. These skyrocketing costs are due to both the increase in patients and the cost of newer, more effective medications and treatment processes.
8. Federal health insurance plans such as Medicare usually cover about 80% of costs for kidney disease patients.
9. Medical research remains the best hope to reduce human suffering and the enormous Medicare costs imposed by ESRD.
10. Unless people experiencing kidney failure are treated, they can die within days, due to the build-up of toxins and fluid in their blood.

The American Society of Nephrology™ thanks the United States Renal Data System (USRDS), National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), Hypertension Online, The American Kidney Fund, The American Association of Kidney Patients, and the United States Department of Health and Human Services for the above information.