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# Latino Times

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## The Importance of CKD Awareness in the Hispanic Community

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Chances are, you know someone who has Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). Latinos are at an increased risk of developing the disease. According to the American Kidney Foundation, one in every eight Latinos currently has CKD. There is a good chance you are not aware of what CKD actually is, what it means for your family and friends who have it, and what you can do to prevent it. Satellite Healthcare (SHC), a not-for-profit organization, has been researching and treating patients with CKD in the San Francisco Bay Area and across the country for forty years. In that time, SHC has helped educate thousands of Latinos, their families, and communities about how to improve the quality of their lives and live healthier with CKD.

CKD is diagnosed when the kidneys can no longer efficiently do their job of excreting waste products derived from food and byproducts, which result from the body's metabolism. This may sound complicated; but the short of it is that when a person has CKD his/her kidneys need help to keep the person healthy. Just like with cancer and other serious diseases, CKD progresses through a number of stages. At the final stage of the disease, a kidney transplant is the best option; and the most effective transplant is a kidney received from a live donor – often someone in a person's family. When transplant is not available, dialysis is the next best treatment. Hemodialysis is a modality in which

a person's blood goes through a machine for three to four hours each treatment to filter out the waste products. Hemodialysis can be done at an outpatient center three times a week or at home four to six times a week. One other modality is peritoneal dialysis, done at home. The patient puts fluid into the peritoneum and exchanges it several times a day, usually about four times. The patient learns to dialyze in the comfort of his/her own home with either modality under close supervision from health care providers.

What causes CKD? High blood pressure and diabetes are two of the most common precursors to developing the disease. Since Latinos are the fastest-growing population with diabetes, there is a real need in the Latino community to raise awareness of CKD and how to avoid it. One of the key ways to prevent CKD is to keep your blood pressure within a healthy range. If you have high blood pressure, it is crucial to start and maintain a low salt diet. If you have been prescribed medication by a physician to control blood pressure you must take it as ordered. It is also important to prevent obesity, which is another common contributor to CKD prevalent among the Latino population, by focusing on good nutrition and regular exercise. If you already have diabetes, keeping your blood sugar controlled, eating well, and getting plenty of exercise will help prevent the onset or progression of CKD.



One real challenge within the Latino community is that many people with health challenges like high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes and CKD lack health insurance – more than 50 percent simply don't have it. The good news is that 46 percent of Latinos in California are eligible for subsidies under Covered California, the state health exchange created under the Affordable Care Act – and open enrollment begins November 15. Now is the perfect

time to start thinking about signing up for coverage so you can get the proper medical attention you need to take care of yourself and your family.

People who develop CKD can continue to lead healthy and full lives. In order to achieve the result, we have to work hard to gain knowledge, take action, increase our awareness of the disease, and share what we know about prevention and treatment. You can help our communities thrive.



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