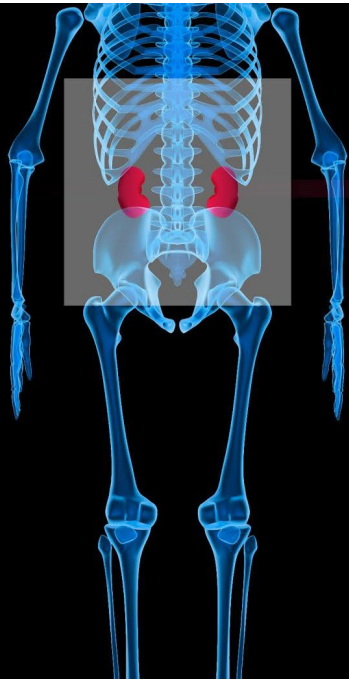


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CCM NEWSLETTER

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NATIONAL Kidney Month

Let's get to know our kidneys- Some of the hardest working organs in our body.

Typically, humans are born with 2 kidneys. Each one is located towards our back on either side of the body. They sit right underneath your ribcage. They play a major role in keeping you healthy by:

- **Regulate blood pressure**
- **Clean out waste from the blood**
- **Activate Vitamin D for healthy bones**
- **Regulate fluid levels**
- **Help with making of red blood cells**
- **Keep the blood minerals (salt, potassium, etc.) in balance**

While YOU may not think about your kidneys very often, your doctor thinks about your kidneys ALOT. Why?

Well, when your kidneys are not working the right way they can cause many problems. Additionally, many medicines that you routinely take can affect the kidneys.

Some problems that kidney disease can cause are:

- **Anemia (low blood red blood cells count)**
- **Stroke**
- **Heart attacks**
- **High blood pressure**
- **Heart disease**
- **Nerve damage**
- **Weak bones**
- **And eventually... complete kidney failure**

Medications that can affect the kidneys:

- **Certain blood pressure medicines**
 - *ACE inhibitors (medicines that end in -pril; like lisinopril)*
 - *ARBs (medicines that end in -sartan; like losartan)*
 - *Water pills (HCTZ, furosemide, lasix)*
- **Pain medication (aspirin, naproxen, ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, Mobic)**
- **Certain antibiotics**
- **Prescription laxatives**
- **Contrast dye (used in MRI or CT scans)**

Well wait a minute! Some of these medications are prescribed to me and I was told that they PROTECT my kidneys!

That's absolutely true! Many of those medications (particularly the ones that help control your blood pressure) are prescribed specifically to help protect your kidneys from the damage that can be caused from high blood pressure or diabetes. These medications are protective up to a point.

If you are dehydrated, you have less blood flow to your kidneys- your kidneys can't filter your blood as well- and then those medicines can cause some kidney damage. Alcohol will make you urinate, this will dehydrate you.

Also, if your blood pressure and diabetes have been uncontrolled for so long your kidneys will get damaged and the benefit of using those medications will have to be reconsidered.

There are certain factors that put you more at risk for kidney disease/damage:

- **Diabetes**
- **High blood pressure**
- **Age 60+**
- **Family history**

You are probably thinking “Whoa this is pretty confusing! Diabetes and high blood pressure can cause kidney damage, and the medications I am taking help protect my kidneys, but at one point may start to damage them?”

It starts to sound like we are talking in one big circle. And- yes you are right- kidney disease and function are affected by many factors and when not working right can lead to other problems.

The kidneys are small, but they are incredibly complex and have a huge impact on how our body works. For this reason, in medical school, doctors spend a significant amount of time dedicated to studying just the kidneys... and it is a tough course.

If it seems that we physicians are obsessed with your kidneys, you are correct. Their importance is why we regularly check kidney function in your blood work. We always have an eye on it when we are prescribing medications, ordering imaging and when assessing how well your blood pressure or diabetes is controlled.

If you have kidney disease, it's important to keep it from getting worse. People with kidney disease have what is called “chronic kidney disease” or CKD. The severity of your disease is grouped by stages. The higher numbers of your stage, the more severe your disease. When your kidneys don't work very well at all you will need the help of machines to work like your kidneys.

Dialysis is the process by which a machine helps clean your blood and keeps your body functioning. Often people on dialysis have to get their blood cleaned 3 times a week. It's a long process and not very pleasant. People on dialysis have a weak immune system, and so they are at risk for infections and may be in the hospital more.

Hopefully, you have a new-found respect and admiration for those hard-working kidneys of yours! If you currently have chronic kidney disease or have a medical condition - (like high blood pressure or diabetes) and have questions about your kidney function, don't be afraid to ask about it at your next appointment. The more you know about your health the better you can be at taking care of it!

COVID CORNER

****Breaking News****

The FDA recently authorized the use of a **THIRD** COVID-19 vaccine. This vaccine is made by Johnson & Johnson. This vaccine uses a small part of an existing common virus (adenovirus) to carry information into the body so it can produce the spike protein. (*Don't worry- the piece of the adenovirus has been changed so it can't reproduce in your body to cause illness.*) Then, just like with the other COVID vaccines, the body will make antibodies to that spike protein, protecting us from possible COVID infection.

The new vaccine is approximately 77% effective in preventing severe/critical COVID infection 14 days after the dose and 85% effective 28 days after the dose.

This vaccine differs from the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, in that it's **ONLY ONE DOSE!**

The side effects of this vaccine are similar to that after the first dose of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

Since the vaccine is so recently developed, we don't have information **yet** on exactly how long the vaccine will provide protection nor do we know for sure that it will prevent transmission of COVID. So, continue to wear your mask and physically distance yourself in large crowds.

Last month the various COVID treatments were discussed. Vitamin C and Zinc were mentioned as treatments commonly used to combat the common cold and flu. Therefore, it was only natural to assume that high doses of Vitamin C and Zinc can reduce the number of days people will have COVID symptoms.

However, this is NOT TRUE. A recent study compared the use of high dose vitamin C and Zinc versus usual symptom care (meaning no Vitamin C or Zinc).

The outcome:

NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE in how many days the COVID symptoms lasted between the two groups.

BOTTOM LINE: If you get COVID- Don't waste your money on taking high doses of Vitamin C and Zinc. It's not going to make a real difference on how long your symptoms last.

Lastly, there have been some new additions to the Chronic Care Management Team.

Dr. Lori Vicente received her medical degree from the Philippines prior to moving to the United States with her family. She is currently working towards securing a spot in a specialty training program here in the United States, while working with the CCM program for the clinic. Don't be surprised if you get a phone call from her following up on a clinic visit or specialist visit to make sure you know what to do and have what you need to improve your health.

I am a familiar name, if not face to many of you. In addition to having the privilege of growing up in Weimar and getting to know many of you and your children, I am also assisting in the CCM program for the clinic. I earned my medical degree from the University of Wisconsin - Madison Medical School and then trained in downtown Milwaukee at Aurora St. Luke Medical System. I am a board-certified Family Physician and I have a special interest in wellness and prevention programs. You may also be hearing from me as we work together to initiate or revise your health care plan.

Bonus Information

- 95% of Physicians have received one type of COVID-19 vaccine.
- Obesity decreases the body's ability to fight cancer!
- At least two thirds of the U.S. population are either obese or overweight.
- Get your COVID vaccine ASAP! Call us to put your name on "the list."
- 95% of our Youens & Duchicela staff are fully COVID vaccinated.
- "One of the most important biomedical success stories of the past half-century in the United States has been a 50% reduction in cardiovascular mortality."

-New England Journal of Medicine, March 4, 2021