

The National Kidney Foundation

NKF

nkf connect

October 2020



moving forward together

Thank you for your strong support for our cause. The burden of kidney failure carries significant impact on patients and their families as dialysis is a long-term care and an expensive one. The yearly treatment cost for haemodialysis amounts to \$25,000 per patient, not to mention other medical costs and opportunity cost when a patient loses his or her job. Dialysis patients, more often than not, have to quit their jobs or reduce their work hours or responsibilities after starting dialysis. Many currently face uncertainties amid the Covid-19 economic crisis.

While about 70% of our 3,800 haemodialysis patients only pay between \$0 to \$50 every month for dialysis out-of-pocket, I am happy to share that since 1 July 2020, we have been able to further alleviate the financial stress of another 1,500 patients by providing higher subsidies for dialysis and medication, which translates to substantial cost savings of between \$948 to \$2,688 yearly to tide them through the economic uncertainties.

As we continue to provide financial and psychosocial care for our patients, our work to prevent kidney failure continues unabated. This is especially important as diabetes is a major cause of kidney failure, blindness and amputations. World Diabetes Day, which falls on 14 November every year, reminds us of the grim facts in Singapore. Currently, there are over 400,000 Singaporeans living with diabetes. One in three Singaporeans has a lifetime of getting diabetes and if nothing is done, the number of those with diabetes is projected to reach one million by 2050. Correspondingly, the rising number of diabetics will drive the diabetes-induced kidney failure rate up. In fact, for the past few years, Singapore has been ranked among the top globally for diabetes-induced kidney failure rate with 2 in 3 cases of kidney failure due to it. In this issue, our patient Mr Aw Boon Kheng shares his story of being regretful in not taking care of his diabetic condition which led to kidney failure as he wants others not to end up like him.

Though managing diabetes is not easy, NKF remains committed to persevere in our attempt to fight against kidney failure. It is not impossible to change our taste buds but we need to know the triggering factor for us to do so. To watch your sugar intake and lower your risk of getting diabetes, read our Caring for Your Kidneys segment.

As we journey together to help kidney patients, let's continue to take care of our health and that of our loved ones for a better future.

Tim Oei
Chief Executive Officer



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Volunteer



qrco.de/nkfvolunteer

Donate



qrco.de/nkfdonation

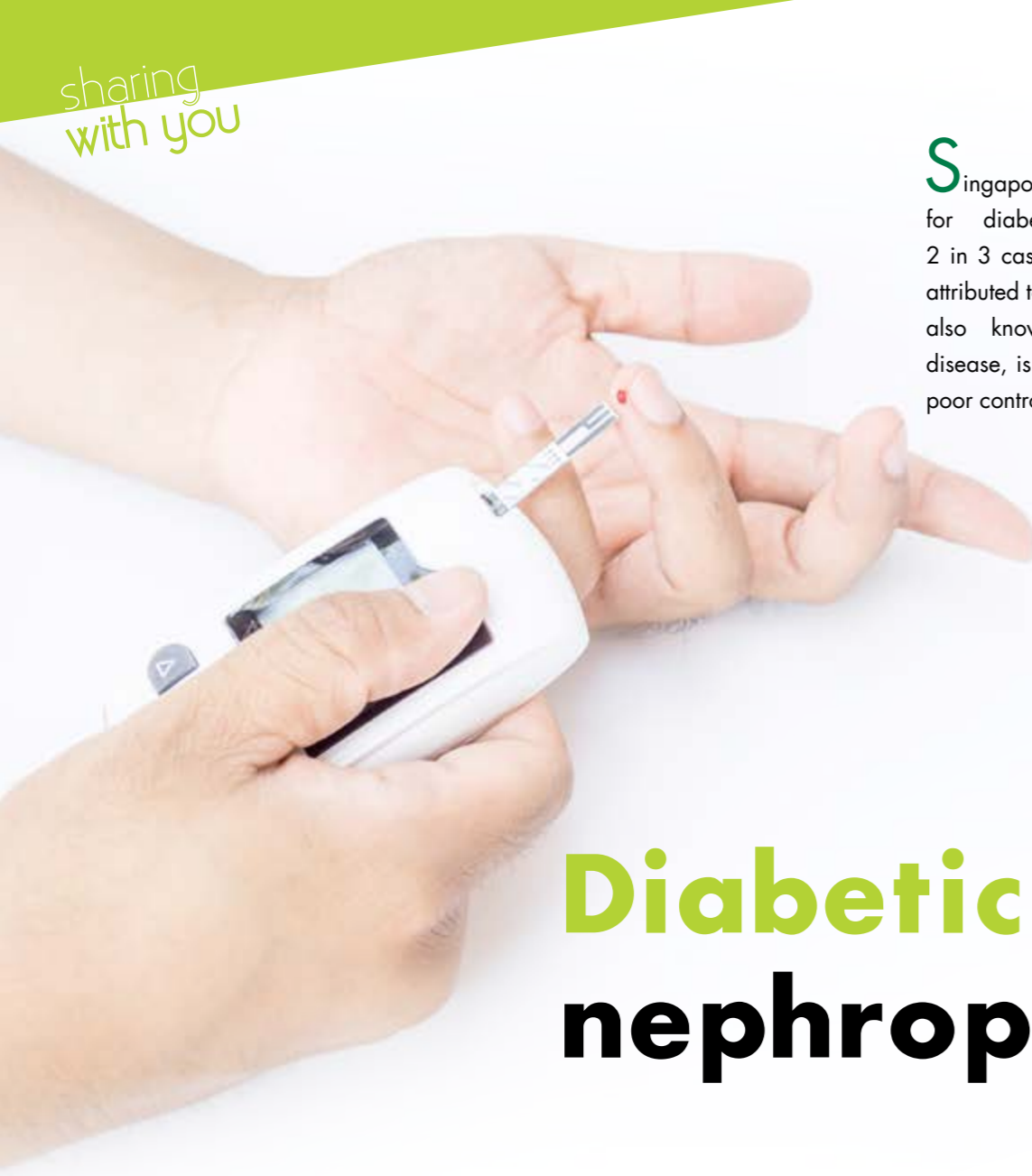
The National Kidney Foundation

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Singapore ranks top in the world for diabetic nephropathy, with 2 in 3 cases of kidney failure being attributed to it. Diabetic nephropathy, also known as diabetic kidney disease, is common in diabetics with poor control of their condition.

Diabetic nephropathy

More information on diabetic nephropathy
qrco.de/nkfdn



Here are some tips to help you reduce your risk of diabetes



Manage your weight

Being overweight/obese, especially with excess body fat around the abdominal area, can increase insulin resistance whereby body cells do not respond properly to the hormone insulin and eventually lead to type 2 diabetes. Exercising regularly helps better manage a person's weight, blood glucose, blood pressure and even blood cholesterol levels. Aim for 150 minutes of physical activity per week.



Eat a balanced, healthy diet

Opt for wholegrains and eat more fruit, vegetables and high-fibre foods. Choose lean meats and reduce the amount of fat in your diet, especially saturated and trans fats. Reduce your salt intake.

Signs & Symptoms



Lethargy

Experience fatigue and a general feeling of being unwell



Swelling in legs

Swollen ankles and feet (due to retention of fluid) and hands or eyes may also be affected



Itching

May feel persistent itching on the body



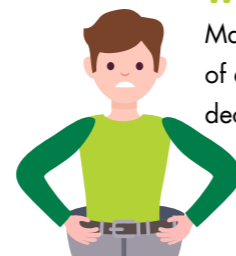
Nausea and/or vomiting

Experience nausea and/or vomiting which may result in having difficulty in concentrating



Foam in Urine

Visible foam in urine caused by the presence of protein in the urine



Weight Loss

May experience loss of appetite and a decrease in weight



Limit alcohol intake

Excessive consumption of alcohol can lead to undesirable weight gain and may increase your blood pressure and triglyceride levels.



Quit smoking

Risk for smokers to develop diabetes are twice as high compared to non-smokers.



Go for regular check-ups

As you age, it is a good idea to go for regular health check on blood glucose, blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels.

did you know?

World Diabetes Day (WDD) creates awareness on the growing concerns about the escalating health threat posed by diabetes, which is largely treatable and preventable. It is marked every year on 14 November, the birthday of Sir Frederick Banting, who co-discovered insulin along with Charles Best in 1922.

A light of hope

Mdm Hakimah has been undergoing dialysis for the past two years. She goes for her treatment three times a week in the evenings after she finishes work, for four hours each session. This single parent with a daughter finds it extremely tiring to do so.

"There is nothing I can do. No matter what, I still need to come for treatment. Sometimes my daughter will not be able to accompany me as she is busy with school. So I have to go alone. People sometimes see us kidney patients as normal, but in actual fact, after dialysis, we feel tired and dizzy. There are times I feel like collapsing and afraid to take public transport home. So I take a cab," says Mdm Hakimah.

Working as a clerk and earning \$2,000 monthly, she says that the subsidy for treatment is a welcome relief. Previously, after deducting from Medisave, she had to spend around \$400 in cash. With the subsidy, this has been reduced to only \$200.

"The additional subsidies will help me with my transport costs to and from the dialysis centre. It also gives me greater peace of mind amidst the uncertain economic times."

Mdm Hakimah not only has kidney failure, she also suffers from diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol. She also underwent a surgery to remove her ovaries. This year, she had two minor heart attacks and has a pacemaker implanted in her.

"Fortunately, my employers are very understanding. Many companies have started to lay off employees during the Covid-19 period. I am very worried I would be asked to leave too because of the sick leave I have been taking. Thank goodness, so far, they understand my situation."

The additional subsidies will help me with my transport costs to and from the dialysis centre. It also gives me greater peace of mind amidst the uncertain economic times.

Mdm Hakimah Yusof
who is grateful for the higher subsidies

More subsidies to better support 40% of patients

There are currently about
1,750 of NKF's 3,800
haemodialysis patients paying
\$0 every month
for dialysis out-of-pocket.

Since 1 July 2020, we have been able to further alleviate the financial stress of **another 1,500 patients** by providing higher subsidies for dialysis and medication, which translates to substantial cost **savings of up to \$2,688** yearly to tide them through the economic uncertainties.

One patient who is benefitting from the higher subsidies is 49-year-old Mdm Hakimah Yusof.

Make a difference and support our patients
qrco.de/donation



Paying a heavy price

I will continue to do my part to encourage people in the community to eat right, exercise and stay healthy to prevent getting chronic illnesses. Once you get kidney failure, it's too late.

Mr Aw Boon Kheng

kidney patient who shares his experiences with others so that they will not end up like him

Working into the wee hours of the morning as a part-time bouncer at a discotheque in the 1990s, Mr Aw Boon Kheng indulged in the free flow of sugary drinks and eating oily, salty food at hawker centres for his regular meals. When he later developed diabetes and high blood pressure in his 30s, he simply brushed these conditions aside and only took his medication sporadically.

His unhealthy lifestyle, bad eating habits and nonchalant attitude towards his health eventually took a toll on him. Six years ago, he started feeling weak in his body and his legs started swelling, and he eventually ended up with kidney failure.

"I took things lightly and neglected my health when I was younger. In those days, I knew little about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, eating the right kinds of food and the dangers of consuming too much sugar. No one taught me these things. By the time I learnt my lesson, it was too late," says the 53-year-old remorsefully.

When Mr Aw was first diagnosed with kidney failure, he refused to accept his illness and went against his renal doctor's advice to start dialysis as soon as possible. Months passed and his condition deteriorated until he had no choice. It was either life-long dialysis or face death.

"I kept going in and out of hospital to remove the excess water in my body. I told the doctor 'I can still take the bus, walk and come to the hospital myself, so nothing wrong with me'. I was in denial."

Now, Mr Aw is doing well on dialysis and is thankful to NKF for providing him with subsidised dialysis where he only pays \$50 a month. He is active in NKF's social and volunteer work. He shares with fellow patients about NKF's patient employment programme to help them get back on their feet economically. After the Covid-19 pandemic is over, he hopes to use his first-hand

experience to help new patients who might still be reeling from their diagnosis, put them at ease and share with them available resources in their rehabilitation journey.

"It is not only about the dialysis treatment, but the emotional, mental, family and financial issues that kidney patients have to deal with. I want to support other patients through my sharing because I can relate to them."

Learning from his past mistakes, he wants others to lead a healthy lifestyle. Last year, in conjunction with World Diabetes Day, he helped to man NKF's booth at a hospital community health fair to encourage the public to care for their kidneys. Whenever he is called upon, he volunteers as a model patient for nursing and dietetic training workshops.

"I will continue to do my part to encourage people in the community to eat right, exercise and stay healthy to prevent getting chronic illnesses. Once you get kidney failure, it's too late."



Read our haemodialysis patients' stories
qrco.de/nkfhd



A bright future

In his early twenties and with his whole life ahead of him, young Abu Ubaidah's life took an unexpected jolt. He never imagined he would end up with kidney failure.

"It was sometime in 2016 while serving my National Service (NS) when I had an inkling that something was not right. My blood pressure was high and didn't go down and I felt dizzy often," Abu recalls.

His health then took a turn for the worse a year later. While at a polyclinic for a routine heart scan, he suddenly felt giddy when he stood up and his blood pressure dropped there and then.

"I requested for help and they wheeled me into the room. My blood test results later showed that my creatinine levels were extremely high. I underwent a biopsy at a hospital and was diagnosed with IgA nephropathy, a kidney disease where my kidneys were inflamed. I started taking a host of medication."

Despite his health issues, Abu still managed to complete his NS and enrolled at the National University of Singapore to pursue a degree in social work and sociology. His first year was tough having to cope with the hectic schedule. He constantly experienced fatigue and nausea. However, he remained focused on his studies and even joined the school's jazz band as a singer.

His condition continued to deteriorate and in 2019, he was diagnosed with kidney failure and had to start dialysis. After doing his own research and discussing with the hospital doctor on dialysis options, Abu decided on peritoneal dialysis (PD), a home-based treatment rather than doing haemodialysis (HD) at a community-based centre.

"I chose PD because it's gentler on the heart. I'm also young and it's easy to be self-reliant in carrying out the treatment. I'm able to do my dialysis at home daily during the night for about 10 hours while I sleep and I don't have to spend time going to a dialysis centre in the day for thrice weekly dialysis. It frees up my days to lead a normal life with less restrictions to my schedule. I've adapted well to this lifestyle change", Abu says confidently.

A PD nurse from NKF visits his home regularly to help him optimise his self-care and he is grateful for the support, especially during the initial stages when he was at a loss coping with PD. He is also thankful for the financial support through the high subsidies provided.



I will not let kidney failure weigh me down. I am determined to finish my studies in social work.

Mr Abu Ubaidah, 22
who is determined to contribute back to society by helping the needy

Read our peritoneal dialysis patients' stories
qrco.de/nkfpd



Abu finds comfort and support in sharing his feelings with close friends and family. He also joined a PD support group and even hopes to initiate a group especially for young patients as they face different challenges like coping in school.

"I will not let kidney failure weigh me down. I want to finish my studies in social work. During my NS, I've seen people who have been to prison, abused drugs or come from broken families. It really hammered down my determination to help the vulnerable for a better life."

Project Beans



Project Beans' founding group (in uniform), together with the NKF team

We were touched by the reactions of the patients and how our small actions could impact others so deeply, so we really wanted to continue with the project.

Ms Tan Yi Hui
ex-Raffles Girls' School (Secondary) student

We were inspired to raise awareness about kidney disease because we felt it was a very meaningful cause and it is an issue that is affecting the lives of so many people.

Ms Allyscia Clare Pereira
Raffles Girls' School (Secondary) student



Project Beans' current team

After learning about the rising trend in kidney failure cases and the financial burden this disease brings to patients needing dialysis, five students from Raffles Girls' School (Secondary) embarked on Project Beans to befriend patients at NKF's dialysis centres to understand their needs. They then leveraged their school's Community Fair to create awareness on kidney failure and even raised more than \$400 which they used to bring a group of patients and caregivers for a fun, educational and therapeutic outing to The Singapore Bicentennial Experience. They have passed on the baton to a group of juniors, sprouting the next generation of Project Beans to continue spreading awareness of kidney health and the spirit of giving. In spite of the obstacles posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, Project Beans continues to make an impact by putting up weekly posts on an Instagram page, @proj.beans, and sending monthly newsletters on kidney health to their schoolmates, to spread awareness about kidney failure.

Make a difference and volunteer with us today!

qrco.de/nkfvolunteer



Friends of NKF

Not a member yet?
Here's how to join us
qrco.de/nkfld



Thank you for your continuous support and generosity to our cause. In appreciation of Friends of NKF members like yourself, here are some exclusive discounts and privileges that have been lined up for you!

Brunches Café 10% discount	Food & Beverage	Camaca 10% discount
Col Juice 10% discount	Pretty Easy Cafe 10% discount	Wholesome Savour 15% discount
BYKidO \$3 off tickets and eVouchers	Lifestyle	The Sustainability Project 15% discount
Kong Dental Clinic Special rate	Kohepets 10% off	KFI Karting Circuit Special rate

Terms & Conditions apply

Forgot to bring your FON card?

No worries! We will be launching our FON e-card in January 2021 where you can have it on the go. At the same time, you will be updated on the latest promotions, deals and special discounts!

Scan QR code for the full list of FON partners
qrco.de/nkffon



Giving life and hope in tough times

We are immensely heartened by the unwavering support from various partners, donors and volunteers whose contributions have gone a long way in ensuring the safety and well-being of our patients, as well as boosting the morale of our frontliners during this Covid-19 pandemic. From face masks to hand sanitisers and food products, we are thankful for each and every encouragement and contribution. Join us in our fight to overcome the tough challenges and give Life and Hope to our patients through these meaningful campaigns.



Fight against the Covid-19 pandemic together

Your gift brings **LIFE** to our patients. Kidney patients have an increased risk of infection due to their weaker immune systems. It is thus important to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 and ensure continuous implementation of heightened precautionary measures. Donations raised through this campaign will help support the smooth operations of our 38 dialysis centres and ensure the safety and well-being of over 3,800 haemodialysis patients and their caregivers.

Find out more at
qrco.de/gsgfacovid



Project 我爱你 (520)

Your gift brings **HOPE** to our patients. Through your support, all patients have gratefully received a bundle of nutritious fruits in July to boost their immune systems. We have also spared no efforts to protect our vulnerable patients by ensuring the highest standards in infection control. One of the essential measures is providing surgical masks for all our patients who undergo dialysis thrice weekly at our dialysis centres and the caregivers who accompany them. Donations raised through this campaign will go towards sponsoring much-needed surgical masks.

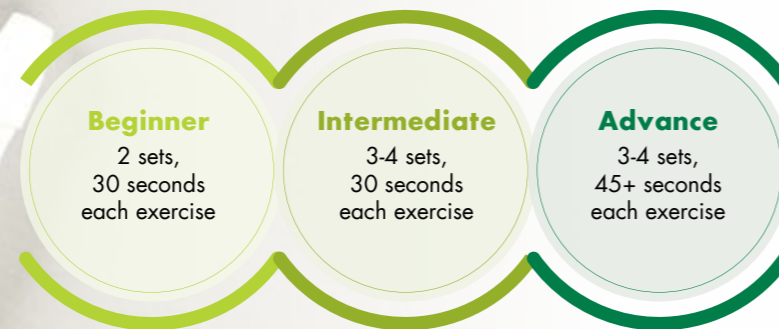
Find out more at
qrco.de/gsgp520



Get your body moving

Diabetes is a disorder in the way the body uses glucose. A person who has insulin resistance will require larger amounts of insulin either from their own pancreas or from injections to keep blood glucose stable. Physical exercise has the potential to make your insulin more efficient. As working adults, we spend most of our time in a sedentary position like seated in the office or at home. It is important to know that exercise cannot compensate for too much sitting. Hence, here are some simple exercises that you can do at your desk or even when taking a break.

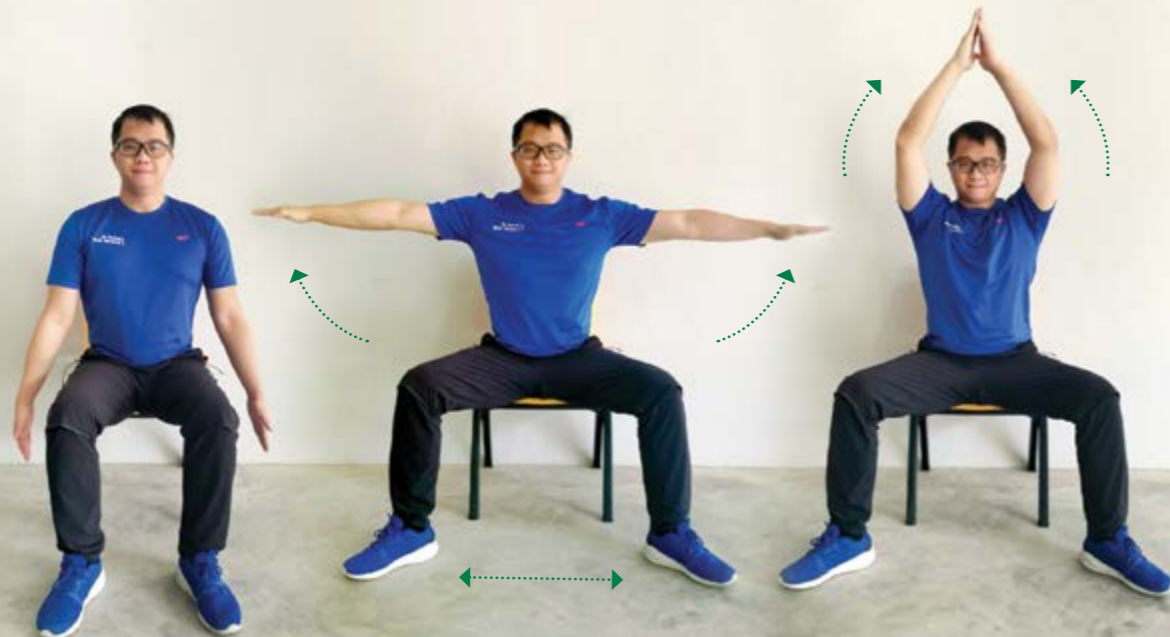
Recommendations:



Rest 1 minute in between sets • Do 2-3 times per week with alternate rest day

Seated jumping jacks

Sit up straight with knees bent, straighten arms to the side with palms facing inwards. Quickly open legs out to sides, landing on feet, and extending arms overhead. Return to starting position and repeat.



Alternate lunges

Step forward with your left leg and lower your body until your knee is bent at 90 degrees, with right knee just off the floor. Keep your torso upright. Return to starting position and repeat the same for right leg.



Seated russian twist with small weight

Sit upright, both hands straighten out holding weight (water bottle), rotate your body at the hips with your hands straight to the right. Repeat the same for the left side.



Table top plank mountain climber

Start in a plank position on stable table. Drive your left knee upwards to 90 degrees, repeat the same for the right side.





Diabetes prevention - bust those myths!

Myth 1: **Diabetes can be cured**

Diabetes is a chronic disease with no cure. It is therefore important to have regular screenings to detect diabetes early and obtain timely treatment. On the contrary, pre-diabetes (when your blood sugar level is higher than normal but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as Type 2 diabetes) is reversible through lifestyle changes such as losing weight and maintaining a healthy Body Mass Index (BMI), adopting a healthy diet and engaging in regular physical activity.

Myth 2: **Only overweight or obese people can have diabetes**

Being overweight and obese (having a body mass index – BMI – of 30 or greater) does greatly increase one's risk of developing diabetes as research suggests that obese people with BMI more than 35kg/m² have 80 times greater risk to develop diabetes than those of normal weight. However, people of all shapes and sizes can develop diabetes as weight is only one of the risk factors. Other risk factors include poor eating habits; an inactive lifestyle; being 40 years old and above; family history with diabetes; and impaired glucose tolerance or impaired fasting glucose.

Myth 3: **Diabetes is caused by eating too much sweet food**

Diabetes is not necessarily caused by eating too much of sweet food. It is a chronic disease caused by high blood glucose levels, which happens due to the body's inability to produce insulin or respond to it efficiently. Although eating sweet food alone may not cause diabetes directly, a diet high in sugar and fat can lead to undesirable weight gain and in turn, lead to being overweight or obese, which then increases one's risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

Myth 4: **Individuals should avoid carbohydrates to reduce diabetes risk**

Carbohydrates are the main nutrient which impacts blood glucose levels as they are broken down into glucose to supply energy for the body. However, it is not advisable to totally avoid carbohydrate intake because carbohydrates are the main energy source to our body and they are present in a variety of foods such as grains, fruits, vegetables, milk and dairy products, which may also be important sources of other nutrients.

RUN INSPIRED!

BE INSPIRED TO RUN & DO GOOD

Registration link
qrco.de/runinsreg



11-31 JAN 2021

RUN INSPIRED! is NKF's inaugural three-week virtual charity run event. Participants in this virtual mass run can do so at their own pace and space with the aim of achieving a collective distance of 55,000km to advocate kidney health as a nation. Motivational stories of NKF's stakeholders shared throughout the event will uplift the community to step out of their comfort zone to run for a meaningful cause and be empowered to take charge of their own well-being.



Registration Date:

From 14 Oct 2020

Registration Fee:

\$9.99

Race Category:

5km, 10km, 21km and 55km

Place and Time:

You decide!

30% of all race proceeds will be donated to NKF for the provision of Artificial Kidneys (A.K.s) - crucial in haemodialysis treatment to filter waste and excess fluids - for our patients. So rally your friends and family members to run together for a good cause! To make your run even more meaningful, you can start your own fundraising campaign via Giving.sg to garner support and donations to help kidney patients!

Keep a lookout on NKF's Facebook and Instagram for exciting event updates and special giveaways coming your way! Join us now! Run anytime, anywhere!

See you online! #RUNINSPIRED