

Dr. Sylvia Rosas Discusses Kidney Health and NKDEP's Spanish-language Web Section on CNN Español

Dr. Rosas: Good morning, Mercedes, and thank you for inviting us to your program to discuss this important topic: the kidneys. We have two kidneys, one on each side. Our kidneys' job is to clean our blood and to get rid of wastes by producing urine. Kidneys are also very important for controlling our blood pressure and creating certain hormones.

Mercedes: Doctor, how do the kidneys get damaged, how do they detect, uh, are there signs or symptoms that the kidneys are damaged?

Dr. Rosas: Well, unfortunately, chronic kidney disease is what we call a silent disease. Only once there is complete kidney failure, when patients need dialysis or a kidney transplant, are there symptoms. Before that there aren't any symptoms. That's why it's so important that those who are at high risk for kidney disease, people with diabetes, people with high blood pressure, people with a family history of kidney disease, that they go to their doctor and ask to be tested for kidney disease with two very simple tests—a blood test and a urine test—that indicates if their kidneys are functioning properly.

Mercedes: We're seeing, doctor, on the screen, a website. It has resources about kidney disease in Spanish. How can we access this website and what kind of information does it give us about kidney disease?

Dr. Rosas: Well, as we were starting our campaign with the National Kidney Disease Education Program we realized that to educate our Latino community we needed relevant information in a Spanish-language website. So we created one, for Hispanics, by Hispanics, in Spanish. On this website you can find the risk factors for kidney disease, how to prevent kidney disease, how to detect it, and if you're someone who already has kidney disease, you can find information on how to change your lifestyle, what type of medication you should take, what kinds of questions you should ask your doctor to prevent kidney failure and ensure your kidneys function as well as they can for as long as possible.

Mercedes: And doctor, once a person has kidney disease, is it possible to cure it? Or is it more of trying to control the situation?

Dr. Rosas: When your kidneys start to be affected, there are things you can do. For example, if you have diabetes, controlling your diabetes has been demonstrated to slow the progression of kidney disease. It's the same with high blood pressure; proper management of high blood pressure prolongs the life of your kidney. That's why the most important treatment is prevention.

Mercedes: Better to prevent than to regret. Dr. Sylvia Rosas, thank you so much.

Dr. Rosas: Thank you very much.