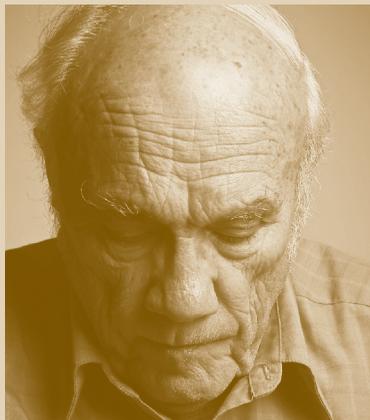
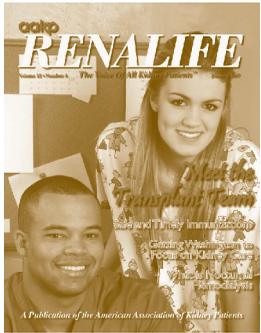


UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION IN KIDNEY DISEASE



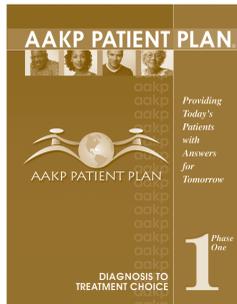
aakp Resources



aakpRENALIFE – This patient magazine is produced six times a year. It contains information for those who are experiencing kidney failure. Topics featured include dialysis, transplantation, medical questions and dietary concerns.

AAKP Patient Plan™

This educational series provides comprehensive information on kidney disease and is available in four phases. It features detailed discussions on the treatment of kidney disease, medications, social concerns and much more. Phase 1 in the series contains a book and Phases 2, 3 and 4 each contain a book and a newsletter.



Kidney Beginnings: A Patient's Guide to Living With Reduced Kidney Function –

This educational piece addresses the concerns of those at risk for kidney disease. The book features

information on the kidneys, how the kidneys work, diabetes, hypertension, medical tests, emotional issues, common medications and much more. It provides patients and family members with answers to questions about the health of their kidneys, diet and overall lifestyle.



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www.aakp.org–

This is the official Web site of the American Association of Kidney Patients. It features numerous educational materials from AAKP, a list of programs, the latest AAKP news, and links to several other educational Web sites.



AAKP My Health™ – This is a unique section of the AAKP Web site, www.aakp.org, dedicated to helping you take charge of your healthcare. **AAKP My Health** allows you to monitor your lab values, record valuable health contact information, store information about your medications and learn more about kidney disease and its impact on you anywhere Internet access is available.

Dietary Booklet – AAKP provides this pocket-size brochure as a guide to eating healthy with kidney disease. It contains the amounts of sodium, potassium, phosphorus, calories and protein in standard sizes of everyday foods. This brochure is also available in Spanish.

Educational Brochures – AAKP also produces specialized packets for those at various stages of kidney disease, from those who have recently been diagnosed to the long-term patient. These free educational packets provide specific information to help patients and their families deal with the physical, emotional and social impact of kidney disease.

Overview

Living with chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a challenging task which impacts nearly every aspect of your life. Despite these lifestyle changes, one aspect of your life you shouldn't sacrifice is your emotional well-being. Learning to recognize and understand the impact depression has on you, as well as others you care about, will help you live a full and productive life while coping with CKD.

“When I looked around my clinic and saw other patients laughing with the staff or talking about their jobs and hobbies with other patients, I couldn't figure out why I had no interest in any of those things or anything else in my life for that matter.” John H., Dallas, TX

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is a complex and serious medical issue impacting nearly 30 million Americans every year. Depression can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, race or socioeconomic background. Depression causes individuals to lose interest in life, withdraw from those they care about and stop participating in activities they once found enjoyable. In its severest form, untreated depression can lead to suicide.



“I thought I was the only one feeling so sad and down. It was helpful to me to learn that I wasn't the only one suffering from depression.” Robert P., Chicago, IL

DEPRESSION AND CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

Unfortunately, as a dialysis patient, you may be at a greater risk of suffering from depression than those who do not have kidney disease. Depression rates in the general population are about 10 percent of all Americans annually. If you are on dialysis, those rates soar between 20-30 percent.

Untreated, depression can be associated with other dialysis health issues such as:

- **An increase in death rates**
- **An increase in hospital stays**
- **An increase in patients shortening/skipping dialysis treatments**
- **A decrease in patients taking their medications**

THE SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

Depression can present itself in many ways. What is important to understand is depression is not the normal feelings of sadness or grief we all experience from time to time. These feelings are generally associated with a distinct event, such as the death of a family member, friend or another unpleasant experience. These normal feelings of sadness and grief tend to pass after a relatively short time and you return to your normal level of functioning.

Depression on the other hand is characterized by a set of emotional and physical symptoms that tend to last for longer periods of time and despite your best efforts your mood doesn't improve. If you are on dialysis, some of these symptoms may look similar to what you might be experiencing because of your CKD. The following symptoms are signs of the disease. These signs are what physicians and other mental health experts use to diagnose the condition.

- Feeling down or depressed most of the day, nearly every day
- Loss of interest or pleasure in most activities
- Significant weight loss or weight gain
- Sleep problems (sleeping too much, waking at night and being unable to return to sleep, or not sleeping enough)
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feeling slowed down or like you are moving in "slow-motion"
- Feelings of being worthless, useless or feeling guilty for no apparent reason
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

“Sure I had slowed down as I got older, but I still enjoyed going for walks, playing cards, meeting up with friends for coffee or watching my grandchildren play. But over time, I lost all interest in everything and I felt lonely and miserable most of the time.” Margaret C., Los Angeles, CA



WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSION?

Currently, there is no definite answer to this question. However, with advances in research, the medical community is gaining a stronger understanding of depression and what causes it. What is known and can be said without hesitation is being depressed is not a sign of weakness or a statement about your character. Depression can happen to anyone and you may or may not have one of the reasons listed below that contributed to your depression.

- Family history of depression
- Suffering a traumatic event
- Chronic stress
- Certain prescription medications
- Chemical imbalances in the brain
- Alcohol/Drug abuse

“The more I talked to my relatives about my depression, the more I learned that other family members lived with depression too. As I think about it, I am pretty sure my own father had some battles with depression.” Susanne R., Seattle, WA

AM I DEPRESSED?

Depression has the ability to distort your thinking and make you feel bad about yourself. If you feel embarrassed, ashamed or think you should be able to solve your own problems, you are not alone. Thinking you might be depressed can be overwhelming, but remember being depressed doesn't mean you are weak or can't take care of yourself. In fact, the longer you ignore your depression, the worse it can

get. Below are some statements frequently made by people who suffer from depression. If any of these statements sound like you, be sure to tell someone you trust how you are feeling.

- “I am such a burden to everyone.”
- “People would be better off without me around.”
- “I just can’t seem to get going, everything is a chore.”
- “What’s the point of trying anymore?”
- “Nothing seems fun to me, it’s like everything is work.”
- “I just feel ‘empty’ most of the time.”

“It was embarrassing to think I was suffering from depression, but no matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t make myself feel better.” Phil A., New York, NY

SCREENING FOR DEPRESSION

Unlike other medical conditions, depression cannot be diagnosed by a blood test or an x-ray. Rather, the diagnosis of depression relies on you to report your symptoms and feelings to your doctor, social worker, nurse or other healthcare professional. There are many different screening tools which can be used to help determine the level of your depression. The screening tools used are generally questionnaires that ask you a range of questions about your feelings and emotions. Commonly used depression screening tools are:

- The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)
- The Zung Self-Rated Scale for Depression
- The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)

If you are concerned you are suffering from depression, several self-screening tools exist on the internet. These tools do not replace the advice of your physician or other mental health professional. They can give you some idea of your mood and whether or not you might be suffering from depression.

“It felt sort of odd answering questions about my mood, interest in activities, eating and sleeping habits, and whether or not I was thinking about suicide. But after I finished the questionnaire and it showed that I was experiencing a serious bout of depression, it all started to make some sense to me.” Paula T., Miami, FL

TREATMENT FOR DEPRESSION

Many people believe living with depression is just part of life. However, keep in mind depression is not the normal feelings of sadness we all have at one time or another. If you think you are depressed, it is important for you to consider talking with someone about your feelings. Then you can be evaluated and receive help to make you feel better.

Two of the common approaches for treating depression are the use of antidepressants and psychotherapy or counseling. Each approach has benefits, but it is clear using an antidepressant and counseling together is most likely to provide you with the greatest relief from your depression.

Antidepressants

Contrary to common myth, antidepressants are not magic pills which alter your personality, nor are they addictive, “uppers” or stimulants. Rather antidepressants work by alleviating the debilitating feelings of depression, such as feelings of constant sadness and emptiness, recurrent thoughts of death and never ending loneliness.

It has been shown by the National Institute of Mental Health that only 25 percent of all individuals who are suffering from depression are receiving help. The good news is, of the 25 percent who are being treated, nearly 80 percent of them report a significant improvement in their depression.

Although you are dealing with reduced kidney function, many antidepressants exist which are safe for you to use. Your physician will be able to help you find the most effective medication for you. If you are prescribed an antidepressant, some important things to remember are:

- The medication must be taken as prescribed to be effective.
- Generally, you need to take the medication for 6-8 weeks to determine if it is working.

- Not all antidepressants work the same for everyone. If after trying one for the recommended time you don't receive relief, a second (and sometimes a third) medication might need to be tried.
- The length of time you need to take the medication varies from individual to individual. Discontinuing too soon can lead to relapse of your depression. You will need to speak with your doctor about what to expect.
- Side effects of antidepressants can be minimized by adjusting doses or trying a different medication.
- You need to notify your healthcare professional about whether or not the medication is helping to improve your depression.

“The last thing I wanted to do was add another pill to all the ones I already take. Then I tried one and it didn't do anything for me which was frustrating. But I stuck with it and tried a second type and as good as I feel now, I am glad I hung in there.” Ron C., Philadelphia, PA

PSYCHOTHERAPY OR COUNSELING

When thinking about psychotherapy many people still think about the couch in the psychiatrist's office with a passive therapist simply nodding in agreement with what the patient is saying. The reality is, psychotherapy has changed dramatically. Psychotherapy is an interactive process between therapist and client, is goal driven and is generally short term (8-10 visits) in nature.

Today, psychotherapy is focused on working with you as a depressed individual to improve your thinking and coping skills. When you are suffering from depression, it is common to develop negative thoughts. These thoughts make it difficult for you to be happy. For example, when suffering from depression, it is common to think you will never feel better and you begin to lose the ability to be optimistic about change for the good. When you are in psychotherapy, you will work with your therapist to identify this negative thinking and replace it with more positive and productive thoughts.

“It was embarrassing at first, but once it became clear to me the therapist understood what I was dealing with, I actually started to look forward to the sessions.” Irene V., Oklahoma City, OK

WHO TREATS DEPRESSION

Several professionals are available to help you cope with your depression and many of them are available through your dialysis center. Below is a description of some of the professionals who can help you cope with your depression.



1. Dialysis Unit Social Worker

Every dialysis center in the United States is required by federal regulation to have the services of a master's trained social worker available to you. These individuals have training in identifying and counseling persons who are depressed. This is an excellent resource for you to look for to receive help.

2. Psychologist

Many psychotherapists are individuals who have training in psychology with either a master's degree or doctorate. You will most likely find these professionals in private or public mental health clinics. Generally this group is not able to prescribe medications to deal with your depression. They often work with others who can prescribe medications.

3. Psychiatrist

A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who has received special training in mental health disorders. Psychiatrists can prescribe medication to treat issues such as depression. Many psychiatrists no longer engage in psychotherapy, but frequently work in conjunction with social workers, psychologists or other counseling professionals.

OTHER RESOURCES

To learn more about depression, you can visit the AAKP Web site at www.aakp.org or any of the following resources:

1. The National Institute of Mental Health – www.nimh.nih.gov
2. The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance – www.dbsalliance.org
3. National Alliance on Mental Illness – www.nami.org

AAKP Membership

AAKP IS THE ONLY NATIONAL ORGANIZATION DIRECTED BY KIDNEY PATIENTS FOR KIDNEY PATIENTS.

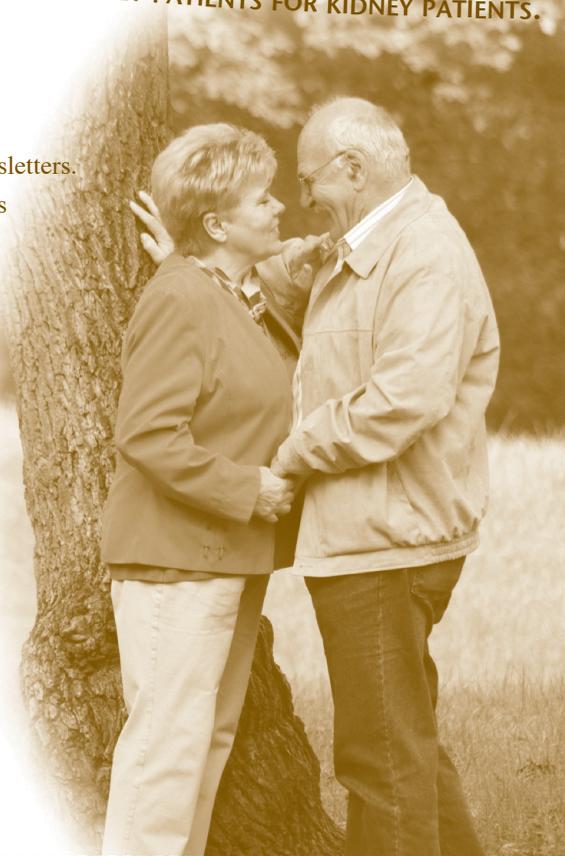
Benefits of Membership:

- A membership packet filled with some of our most popular publications and your very own member ID card.
- Subscriptions to AAKP's magazines: *aakpRENALIFE* and *Kidney Beginnings: The Magazine*.
- Opportunity to subscribe to AAKP's five FREE electronic newsletters.
- Access to **AAKP My Health**TM (an online resource for patients who want to be more proactive in managing their healthcare).
- Automatic membership in the AAKP local chapter nearest you (where applicable).
- Advanced updates of upcoming programs and events.
- Access to relevant and updated public policy information.
- Affiliation with an organization that shares your commitment to making a difference.
- Assurance that your voice is heard and your interests are represented in Washington, DC.

3 Easy Ways to Become a Member...

1. Web site: Visit the Membership section of our Web site, www.aakp.org, to join instantly.
2. Mail: Complete the membership application below and mail it to us at the address on the bottom of the application.
3. Phone: Give us a call at (800)749-AAKP.

Please allow 4 to 6 weeks to receive your membership packet.



Membership Application

- I am not interested in membership at this time, but please send me a complimentary package of information.
- I am already a member of AAKP but I would like to make a donation of \$_____.

Member Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

ZIP: _____ Phone: () _____

Email: _____

Choose a Membership Category:

- Patient/Family Member.....\$25/annually
- Professional Member.....\$45/annually
- Physician Member.....\$100/annually
- Institutional Member..... \$200/annually
- Life Member..... \$1,000*

*or four payments of \$250 every six months for two years

Payment Method

- Check (enclosed and payable to AAKP)
- Visa American Express
- MasterCard Discover

Account number: _____

Name on Card: _____

3 or 4-Digit Security Code: _____

Expiration Date: _____

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