

Wellness Wednesday: Kindness for the kidneys

By **Giana Santos**
For Pacific Daily News

World Kidney Day will be celebrated tomorrow, March 12. This year's theme is "Kidney Health for All – Caring for People, Protecting the Planet."

Your kidneys are two fist-sized organs that filter waste and excess fluid from your blood, and many people never think about them until something goes wrong.

At which point the damage can be devastating for individuals, families, and communities.

The kidneys regulate blood pressure, balance electrolytes like sodium and potassium. They support red blood cell production and maintain bone health through vitamin D activation.

Chronic kidney disease is the gradual loss of kidney function over time.

Early stages produce no symptoms, which means it is possible to lose a significant amount of kidney function before you feel a thing.

8 golden rules of healthy kidneys

Kidney disease is largely preventable. These eight strategies can help you take control of your kidney health.

Control blood pressure. High blood pressure damages the tiny blood vessels in your kidneys over time. A target generally below 120/80 mmHg is ideal. The DASH diet, which emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low sodium foods, has been shown to reduce blood pressure.

If your doctor prescribes medication, take it consistently. Regular monitoring keeps you informed and in control.

Manage blood sug-

ar. If you have diabetes, tight glucose control reduces the risk of diabetic kidney damage. Routine A1C monitoring helps you and your health care team track progress.

People with Type 2 diabetes who achieve an A1C below 7% reduce their risk of kidney disease by roughly 30%.

Eat a kidney-friendly diet. Reduce sodium intake to ideally less than 2,300 milligrams per day. Avoid adding salt to your food, and prepare food at home rather than eating at restaurants, so you have more control over the sodium.

Focus on getting in your daily servings of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Keep protein intake moderate and avoid excessive high-protein diets unless medically supervised.

Limit ultra-processed foods, added sugars, and sugar sweetened beverages.

Maintain a healthy weight. Obesity increases your risk of both diabetes and high blood pressure, the two leading causes of chronic kidney disease.

Regular physical activity for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise, such as brisk walking, helps.

Even small amounts of weight loss can ease the burden on your kidneys.

Stay hydrated. Water is your kidneys' best friend. Adequate water intake supports kidney filtration and helps flush waste from your body.

Avoid excessive sugar sweetened drinks. Plain water is the simplest, most effective choice.

One trick for making sure you drink enough water is taking your weight in pounds and dividing that number in half. Use that number to determine how many ounces of water a person should have in a day. For example, if a person weighs 150 lbs., they should be drinking at least 75 oz. of water daily.

Limit alcohol intake. Excess alcohol raises blood pressure and adds strain to your kidneys.

Avoid overuse of certain pain relievers. Frequent overuse of some common over-the-counter pain medications, like non-steroidal anti-inflammatory or a pain-killer like ibuprofen, can harm your kidneys. Use pain relievers responsibly and talk to your doctor if you rely on them

regularly. **Don't smoke.** Smoking reduces blood flow to your kidneys, which can affect organ function. It increases the risk of kidney cancer by about 50% and speeds up chronic kidney disease progression.

Quitting is one of the best things you can do for your kidneys and your overall health.

Get your kidneys checked if you have one or more risk factors. If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, a family history of kidney disease, obesity or are over 60, talk to your doctor about screening.

Two simple tests can reveal a lot. A blood test called eGFR measures how well your kidneys filter. For this test, a result of more than 60 is ideal.

A urine test checks for albumin, a protein that signals kidney damage.

An ideal uACR test result would be less than 30.

Early detection matters because chronic kidney disease progression can be slowed with early intervention. Lifestyle changes are most effective when you catch problems early.

Know the warning signs

See your doctor if you experience persistent swelling, unexplained fatigue, changes in urination, or high blood pressure that is hard to control. These can be signs that your kidneys need attention. Don't ignore them.

Protect your kidneys by knowing three numbers: your blood pressure, your A1C or fasting glucose, and your eGFR. Ask your doctor for all three at your next visit.

Schedule a check-up. Do your labs.

You and your kidneys will be happy you did.

Giana Santos is the health educator and nutrition counselor at TakeCare. She has more than five years of experience in the health and wellness field. Santos is a certified nutrition and wellness consultant and is a credentialed indigenous lactation counselor. For questions about wellness, contact Santos via email at giana.santos@takecareasia.com.



Santos



GUAM BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR DENTISTRY REGULAR BOARD MEETING Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. Guam (ChST)

194 Hernan Cortez Ave., Terlaje Professional Bldg. Suite 209 Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89984483218?pwd=2wUERuhktSnFcn2NzaLnCXJkuK5ne.1>
Meeting ID: 899 8448 3218

Passcode: 148655

Meeting Agenda:

- I. Call to Order
 - (a) Roll Call
 - (b) Proof of Publications
- II. Approval of Agenda
- III. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Treasurer's Report
- V. HPL Administrator's Report
- VI. Old Business
 - (a) Initial Applications for Review and Approval
- VII. New Business
 - (a) Complaint: GBED-CO-2026-01
 - (b) Initial Applications for Review and Approval
- VIII. Next Board Meeting
- IX. Adjournment

To view the names of the applicants being considered go to <http://guamdentistry.org>

To view live Streaming visit https://govguam.tv/video_details/gbed/gbed-live-stream

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GUAM BOARD OF ALLIED HEALTH EXAMINERS

REGULAR BOARD MEETING Friday, March 13, 2026 at 12:00 PM

194 Hernan Cortez Ave., Terlaje Professional Building Suite 209 Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8352986389?pwd=zR6ZYTbhap2lTrmFGMMdYmlwZTI6G.1>

Meeting ID: 835 2298 6389
Passcode: 710215

MEETING AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
 - A. Roll Call
 - B. Proof of Publications
- II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
- IV. TREASURER'S REPORT
- V. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
- VI. GBAHE COMPLAINTS
 - A. GBAHE-CO-22-03 Received 02/21/22
 - B. GBAHE-CO-23-02 Received 12/28/23
 - C. GBAHE-CO-23-03 Received 12/28/23
 - D. GBAHE-CO-24-03 Received 08/06/24
 - E. GBAHE-CO-25-09 Received 04/29/25
- VII. NEXT BUSINESS
- VIII. NEXT BOARD MEETING
- IX. ADJOURNMENT

To view the names of the applicants being considered go to <https://guamhpl.org/gbahe>
LIVE Streaming link https://govguam.tv/video_details/gbahe/gbahe-live-stream

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For more information or to request for special accommodations, please contact the Board Office at (671) 735-7404/07-12 or email hpl@dpshs.guam.gov.