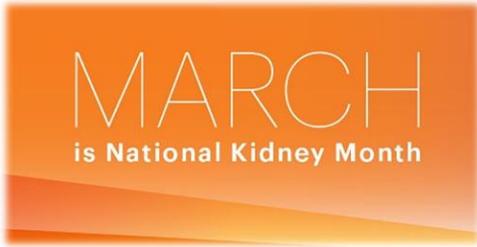




# Prairie Faith Parish Nurse News ~ March 2026

*Walking alongside individuals to meet physical, emotional and spiritual needs,  
by connecting and/or creating healthy resources for their lives.*



When it comes to vital organs, **hearts** get all the love and **kidneys** get the short end of the stick. So, this March, think about your kidneys! Make thinking about your kidney health as important as taking preventative measures against heart disease, cancer or diabetes. Because if your kidneys stop working, so do you!

The kidneys are complicated and amazing organs that do many essential tasks to keep us healthy. The main job of your kidneys is to remove toxins and

excess water from your blood. Kidneys also help to control your blood pressure, to produce red blood cells and to keep your bones healthy. Each roughly the size of your fist, kidneys are located deep in the abdomen, beneath the rib cage. Your kidneys control blood levels of many minerals and molecules including sodium and potassium, and help to control blood acidity. Every day your kidneys carefully control the salt and water in your body so that your blood pressure remains the same.

### Did you know that your kidneys:

*Make urine*

*Filter about 200 liters of blood every 24 hours*

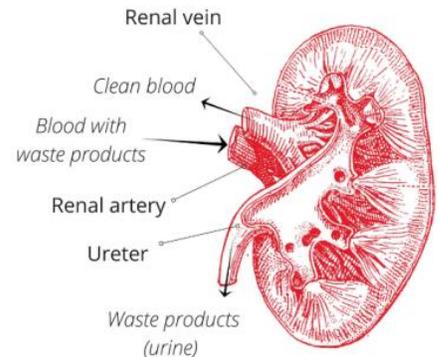
*Remove wastes, toxins & extra fluid from your blood*

*Control your body's chemical balance*

*Help control your blood pressure*

*Help keep your bones healthy*

*Help you make red blood cells*



**What can you do for your kidneys?** Kidney diseases are silent killers, which will largely affect your quality of life.

There are however several easy ways to reduce the risk of developing kidney disease:

1. **Keep physically active** to help maintain healthy blood pressure.
2. **Keep regular control of your blood sugar level.** About half of people who have diabetes develop kidney damage, so it is important for people with diabetes to have regular tests to check their kidney functions.
3. **Monitor your blood pressure.** Although many people may be aware that high blood pressure can lead to a stroke or heart attack, few know that it is also the most common cause of kidney damage.
4. **Eat healthy & maintain a healthy body weight,** helping to prevent diabetes, heart disease & other conditions associated with chronic kidney disease.
5. **Reduce your salt intake.** Limit the amount of processed and fast food you eat & don't add extra salt to food.
6. **Maintain a healthy fluid intake** to help the kidneys clear sodium, urea & toxins from the body.
7. **Do not smoke.** Smoking slows the flow of blood to the kidneys. When less blood reaches the kidneys, it impairs their ability to function properly. Smoking also increases the risk of kidney cancer by about 50 percent.
8. **Do not take over-the-counter pills on a regular basis without talking to your doctor.** Common drugs such non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen are known to cause kidney damage & disease if taken regularly. Such medications probably do not pose significant danger if your kidneys are relatively healthy & you use them for emergencies only, but if you are dealing with chronic pain, such as arthritis or back pain, work with your doctor to find a way to control your pain without putting your kidneys at risk.

**Talk to your physician to get your kidney function checked if you have one or more of these high-risk factors:**

- you are obese
- you have hypertension
- you have diabetes
- one of your parents or other family members suffers from kidney disease

*(Sources of information: National Kidney Foundation and worldkidneyday.org)*

**Walk Kansas** is an annual health initiative of K-State Research & Extension that runs from March 22 through May 16 this year. Walk Kansas is a team-based program, with teams comprised of family, coworkers, friends, community organization members, neighbors, or part of a faith-based community. Participants do not have to live in the same town, county, state or country. There is also an option for a solo participant. Cost for each member is \$10.00, & optional t-shirts/apparel are available at an additional cost.



Sharolyn Jackson, state Walk Kansas program leader, stated, *“Walk Kansas, holistically, really is a chronic disease prevention program, or a way to delay the onset of chronic disease. For those already with a chronic disease, they can learn ways to manage it better through physical activity and healthy eating. We often think about (diseases) that might be genetic, or it’s just your family history. But the reality is that two-thirds of chronic diseases can be prevented or delayed by these lifestyle changes.”*

**Join Walk Kansas and...**

♥ be more active with support from friends & family

♥ make healthier nutrition and beverage choices

♥ learn helpful techniques to reduce stress, sleep well, & improve overall well-being

*You may participate in Walk Kansas in your home county & register through your local extension office, or if you would like to participate in Walk Kansas as a Prairie Faith team member, contact Nancy! 😊*



**COMFORT MEALS**—By a certain time in our lives, most of us have experienced the death of a family member or close friend, have lived a period of time in grief, have gone through a difficult season in our life due to health issues or some sort of life event, or have felt socially isolated for one reason or another. Sometimes friends bring food to the home in the immediate days following a surgery, a death, or other event, but what happens a month or two later, when everyone else has gone back to their regular lives, but the grieving person is just

seeing their new reality without their loved one, or the person is still adjusting to how their life changed for other reasons. They may feel forgotten, lonely, angry or sad or depressed, guilty, self-conscious—there are a whole range of difficult emotions that can linger. That is a time when receiving a card or a visit may be even more meaningful than something at the initial time of the loss or difficult event. The PFSM parish nurse ministry attempts to show support and care to people in the community who may not have family members that live nearby or who may feel isolated and forgotten, in the weeks or months after experiencing a difficult time, by giving a local restaurant gift card or grocery store gift card. Since we may not know a person’s dietary likes/dislikes or food allergies, the gift card option was chosen. Please contact Nancy or the Prairie Faith Shared Ministry office at 785-743-2005 if you know of someone in the community who might benefit from a Comfort Meal gift card.



**Thank you to everyone who contributed to the coat, hat and glove/mitten drive for the Food Pantry during the past few months! We are concluding the drive as of the end of February. Your generosity has been appreciated by members of the community.**



The parish nurse ministry serves the community, regardless of any church affiliation. Feel free to call or email to: schedule a confidential appointment to discuss your health/wellness questions, schedule transportation to a medical/dental/counseling appointment if you need a ride, request a prayer shawl or comfort meal gift card for someone in the community going through a difficult time, locate community health resources, request other parish nurse work, or discuss your ideas for the health ministry! 😊

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785-743-2005 (leave a message, please)