

FIND YOUR **Healthy Way** MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Keeping you connected to important health updates, upcoming classes and helpful resources

Marching to better health



March is packed with reasons to celebrate! We're kicking things off with National Kidney Month—a great reminder to show those two bean-shaped organs some love. Then, we're honoring our heroic physicians on National Doctors Day while making healthy choices for National Nutrition Month. And of course, there's the excitement of March Madness! Whether you're rooting for your favorite team or celebrating healthcare heroes, there's plenty to cheer for this month.

Keeping it clean with the dynamic duo: Your Kidneys!



For National Kidney Month, we're highlighting two bean-shaped organs located on either side of your spine. These unsung heroes play a vital role in maintaining your body's overall health. They filter toxins from your blood and keep everything clean and flowing smoothly!

Did you know 1 in 7 Americans have chronic kidney disease (CKD), the gradual loss of kidney function? Many don't even know it. With early detection and smart lifestyle choices, it's possible to slow down or even prevent CKD. So let's raise awareness about keeping your kidneys in good working order.

Dr. Carmen Slavov answers some important questions on kidney health.

With so many factors impacting kidney health, are there any habits or lifestyle choices that can support kidney function?

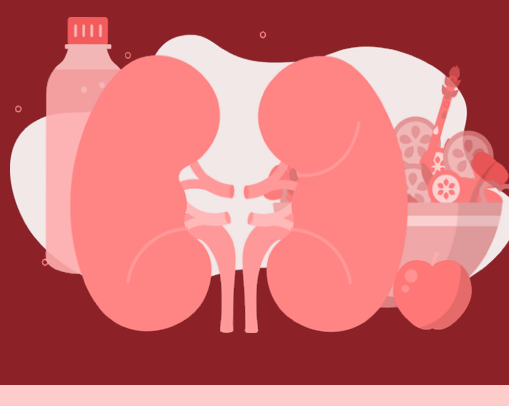
Yes, there are a few habits that can greatly support kidney health. Keeping a balanced, plant-forward diet is essential, even for those without kidney disease. This doesn't mean cutting out animal products entirely, but rather focusing on plant-based meals while occasionally adding animal proteins. Berries, leafy greens and healthy fats from sources such as olive oil or avocados are packed with antioxidants and nutrients to help your kidneys work as they should.

Another factor includes stress management. Chronic stress can elevate blood pressure, which can negatively impact your kidneys. Small changes like mindful breathing, meditation, yoga, listening to music and regular exercise can make a big difference.

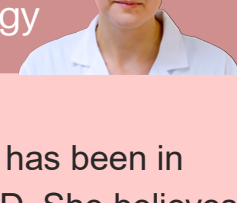
Any other recommendations for people who want to prevent kidney disease?

One of the most impactful things you can do is manage your blood pressure. High blood pressure is a leading cause of kidney disease, and controlling it through diet, exercise and, if necessary, medication can significantly reduce your risk for CKD.

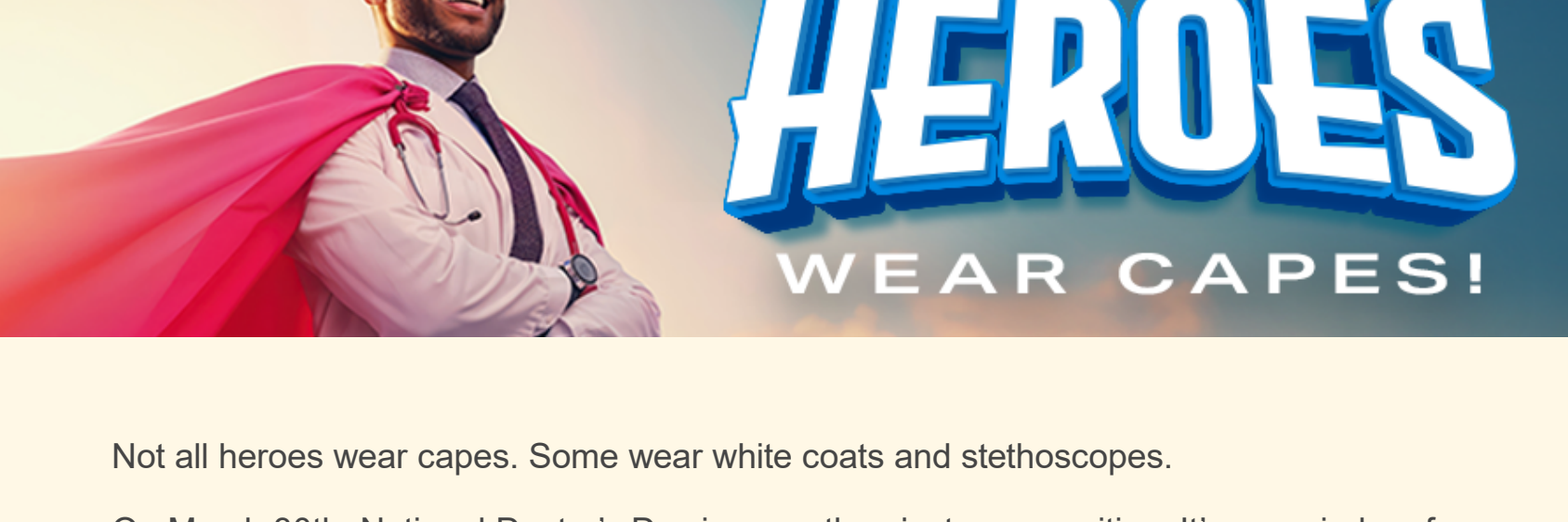
Drinking plenty of water, limiting your salt intake to less than 1.5 grams/day and avoiding processed foods are also important in preventing or slowing the disease



Carmen Slavov, M.D. | Board Certified: Internal Medicine and Nephrology



Dr. Slavov proudly serves Mission Hills and the surrounding communities. She has been in practice for more than 22 years and treats patients living with diabetes and CKD. She believes good communication is key to achieving the best healthcare outcomes. **To learn more about Dr. Slavov, click here.**



Not all heroes wear capes. Some wear white coats and stethoscopes. On March 30th, National Doctor's Day is more than just a recognition. It's a reminder of our fearless doctors who bring skill and empathy to every patient they treat. These everyday heroes change the lives of our members and the community. Their work offers hope, healing and comfort when it matters most.

We're proud to announce three of our gifted providers have been named 2025 Super Doctors. This prestigious honor spotlights their extraordinary talent, innovation and deep passion for patient care. **Congrats to Drs. Del Castillo, Micky and Rungsima! To read more, click here!**

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| | <p>Alan Del Castillo, DO Board Certified: Family Medicine</p> <p>Dr. Del Castillo has devoted more than 23 years to caring for patients five years and older. He volunteers as a camp doctor for the YMCA and continues to inspire both patients and peers with his relentless commitment to excellence. Some members have even been seeing him for 20 years! Join us in congratulating him on this well-deserved achievement.</p> <p>To learn more about Dr. Del Castillo, click here!</p> |
| | <p>Petra "Micky" Obradovic, M.D. Board Certified: Pediatrics</p> <p>Dr. Micky has been delivering compassionate care to children and young adults for more than 20 years. She is a proud mom to her son, Leopold, who plays hockey, and his "brother" Pauli, a German schnauzer. Dr. Micky is highly skilled in martial arts and a huge Trekkie. Her dedication to the Burbank community makes the Super Doctor honor truly earned.</p> <p>To learn more about Dr. Micky, click here!</p> |
| | <p>Rungsima Vayupakparnonde, M.D. Board Certified: Pediatrics</p> <p>"Dr. Rungsima" proudly serves the Burbank community. As a mother of two boys, she finds happiness in watching them grow into healthy young adults. It's part of the reason she became a children's doctor. When not treating patients, she enjoys traveling and exploring different cultures and cuisines. She also enjoys yoga and CrossFit, which allows her to keep up with her sons.</p> <p>To learn more about Dr. Rungsima, click here!</p> |

Celebrate healthy eating with **March Madness tacos!**

What better way to enjoy **National Nutrition Month** than watching March Madness while mauling on healthy tacos? We've got you covered with a delicious plant-based **quinoa & cauliflower rice taco** or lean-meat **chipotle BBQ pork folded taco**. Or better yet, try both! They're packed with protein to keep you fueled for all the men's and women's college hoops action.

Fun fact: Quinoa is rich in fiber, protein and antioxidants which help in regulating cholesterol and blood sugar levels. So, you can enjoy every bite while staying on track with your health goals!

Get each taco recipe below!

- [Quinoa and cauliflower rice](#)
- [Chipotle BBQ pork folded](#)

Recipes are from external links and will open in your default web browser. Sources: <https://kidneynutritioninstitute.org/recipes/plant-based-quinoa-cauliflower-tacos>, <https://diabetesfoodhub.org/recipes/chipotle-bbq-pork-folded-tacos>



It's not too late to **vaccinate!**

Flu season is here! According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as many as 1 in 5 Americans will be infected with the flu this year. And a recent Los Angeles Times article reported, "The worst flu season in years is swamping California, prompting a renewed surge in hospitalizations as officials warn the disease could continue circulating at high levels for weeks to come." (2/11/2025).

If you haven't yet got your annual flu shot, we highly recommend you make an appointment at your local pharmacy such as CVS. It's quick and easy, and the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from a severe case of flu. You're not too late to vaccinate!