

# Be like 'mad max' and look after your kidneys

Issued by [Martina Nicholson Associates](#)

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Maxine Smith was a healthy, beautiful woman who lived life to the fullest. In fact, she was such a role model to women, mothers and all South Africans that she ended up in the top seven of the Mrs United Nations South Africa in 2007. All of this even after her life was turned upside down ...

"I am a kidney failure patient," says Smith, who resides in Johannesburg with her husband, without hesitation. Since March 2006 she has been on dialysis three times per week for four hours at a time. To change her dietary habits and to put so much time aside for dialysis was initially an overwhelming shock for this active woman who is a self confessed "Biker Chick" with the nickname "Mad Max". But, she adds quickly, she soon discovered even having a life-threatening disease does not mean your life comes to a halt.

"I can honestly tell you that my life has changed for the better. At first my mind was in turmoil, but with the support of my family, friends, biking community, my kidney specialist and the Healthy Start Programme from National Renal Care (NRC), I soon made the mind shift that having kidney failure is not a death sentence. In fact, you can live well with kidney disease."

12 March marks World Kidney Day and the third year anniversary of Maxine's kidney failure. "It will always be a day that is close to my heart. I have learnt so much since my diagnosis and I will always have a deep desire to share this with the whole of South African," says Maxine.

This year the spotlight falls on blood pressure as one of the key symptoms and causes of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). "Few people give a second thought to their kidneys until they fall ill and develop CKD, but you can start now to take care of their kidneys and protect them from future damage. The public underestimate just how many people are affected by CKD," adds 'Mad Max'.

According to the World Kidney Day Foundation: Communicable diseases have been replaced by chronic and non-communicable diseases - particularly cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes mellitus and chronic kidney disease - as the leading threat to public health and health budgets worldwide. Adding to this, Noeleen Phillipson, CEO of National Renal Care (NRC) explains: "While infectious diseases will decline as more vaccinations become available and awareness around them increases, chronic diseases in people over 30 years old will increase by as much as 17 percent."

In order to promote awareness around kidney disease and help Maxine in her awareness campaign, NRC and Netcare Hospitals will join forces on World Kidney Day to provide the public with a free opportunity to detect one of the factors that attributes to kidney failure, namely high blood pressure.

"When people suffer from high blood pressure it puts more strain on blood vessels throughout the body, including the kidneys. As a result of hypertension, over time if untreated, kidneys will become damaged and cannot filter waste from the blood or carry out its other jobs. By maintaining a healthy blood pressure, you do not only reduce your risk of kidney damage, but also your chances of experiencing a heart attack or stroke," explains Phillipson.

On World Kidney Day you can visit any of the following Netcare Hospitals to receive a free blood pressure screening in order to alert you to possible kidney related health-dangers:

Pretoria - Netcare Akasia Hospital  
Cape Town - Netcare Blaauwberg Hospital  
PE - Netcare Greenacres Hospital  
KZN - Netcare St Augustine's Hospital  
Gauteng - Netcare Milpark Hospital

- Netcare Sunward park Hospital  
Bloemfontein - Netcare Universitas Hospital

A registered Dietician will also be available on the day to provide advice on diet and lifestyle related queries.

NRC and Netcare invite each and everyone to make good use of this free screening opportunity. “We also urge everyone to make a conscious decision to exercise more, live and eat healthily, limit intake of drinks containing a lot of sugar, caffeine and alcohol. In a nutshell: try to lead a balanced lifestyle, and drink water to satisfy your thirst,” adds Phillipson.

In another bid to make a difference in people's lives that are afflicted by kidney failure, the NRC has embarked on a massive fund-raising initiative to raise money for kidney NGO's. “We are proud and excited to announce the JHB Camel Race that will be hosted at the Inanda Club in Johannesburg on Saturday, 14 March, hot on the heels of World Kidney Day. This fun-filled race will not only assist us in raising much-needed awareness surrounding World Kidney Day, but will also help us fulfill our goal of raising more than half a million rand for kidney NGO's,” promises Phillipson.

“Just as a camel drinks 200 litres of water per day, a healthy human kidney filters 200 litres of blood per day,” explains Phillipson. NRC invites people to not only contribute to this fund-raising initiative, but also to start taking better care of their kidneys.

“Remember, how you treat your kidneys today will definitely influence your future,” concludes Maxine. “Take care of your kidneys and show support to people like me that have this life threatening disease. Together we can make a difference.”

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