

Dear Doctor,

RE: Kidney Health Checks for patients at RISK of kidney disease

Kidney Health Australia is currently running an awareness campaign highlighting the need for people to have their kidney health checked with their General Practitioner.

As you would be aware, early detection, and diagnosis of chronic kidney disease (CKD) together with new treatments help achieve the best outcomes for patients and can slow progression of the disease by up to 15 years.

A patient who attends your practice has completed Kidney Health Australia's online kidney risk test which has flagged that they are at increased risk of CKD.

Susceptibility to kidney disease is increased in people aged 60 years and over and First Nations people aged 18 years and over together with anyone who lives with a known CKD risk factor. We have suggested that your patient visit you for follow-up and to seek a Kidney Health Check and discuss their kidney health as they fall into one or more of these categories.

Kidney Health Checks are recommended every 12 months for:

- People living with diabetes.
- People with hypertension
- First Nations Australians aged 18 years and over

Kidney Health Checks are recommended every 24 months for people with the following risk factors:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Current and former Smokers
- Obesity (BMI > 30kg/m²)
- Family history of kidney failure
- Previous acute kidney injury

People aged 60 years and over should also have an initial kidney health check, but do not need ongoing surveillance unless they develop other risk factors.

Recommended actions:

If your patient has NOT had a Kidney Health Check within the above recommended timeframes:

- 1) Complete a Kidney Health Check consisting of a
 - a. A **blood pressure check**
 - b. **blood test** to determine eGFR (all Australian pathology laboratories will automatically report eGFR with requests for serum creatinine)
 - c. A **urine ACR** (albumin: creatinine ratio) **test** – recommended on a first morning void sample but may be completed on a random spot sample if required.
- 2) Follow the steps to diagnose or exclude CKD found in the '*CKD management in primary care handbook*' (available at www.kidney.org.au/ckdhandbook)
- 3) If CKD is diagnosed, code CKD (stage & underlying condition/s) in the patient record and

follow the action plan that correlates to their stage of disease. Action plans and management advice can be found in the CKD Handbook.

- 4) If CKD is not evident, ensure your patient is added to the recall and reminder register for a repeat check in 12 or 24 months' time, depending on above recommendation.
- 5) It is important that the outcome of the Kidney Health Check is discussed with your patient, to help them understand their risk / diagnosis and to give them the opportunity to implement changes that may delay their disease progression.

If your patient has already had their Kidney Health Check in the last 12 months

- 1) We recommend having a discussion with your patient about CKD, their test results and any lifestyle changes they could make to help lower their CKD risk. Kidney Health Australia has many resources that can help you to do this at [kidney.org.au/resources](https://www.kidney.org.au/resources).
- 2) Add your patient to your recall and reminder register to have their kidney health checked again in 12 months' time if they are living with diabetes or hypertension or are a First Nations person aged 18 years and older; otherwise in 24 months for those with other risk factors.

Kidney Health Australia operates a free Kidney Helpline service, and we encourage you to refer your patients with CKD to the service for additional information and support: 1800 363 454 or email kidney.helpline@kidney.org.au.

We also run a comprehensive education program and offer a variety of resources for health professionals. You can find further information at [kidney.org.au/health-professionals](https://www.kidney.org.au/health-professionals) and can also contact our team at primary.care@kidney.org.au if we can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Breonna Robson
General Manager, Clinical and Research
Kidney Health Australia