

# AUSTRALIANS URGED TO TAKE THE TWO MINUTE TEST THAT COULD SAVE A LIFE

## KIDNEY DISEASE – IT’S MORE THAN A WEE PROBLEM

### KIDNEY HEALTH WEEK

May 21-27

Kidney Health Australia is urging adults to take a simple two-minute online test to determine if they are at risk of developing kidney disease.

Of the 2 million – or one in 10 – Australian adults affected by kidney disease, 1.8 million are completely unaware of it - likely due to the lack of symptoms. However, an easy online test during Kidney Health Week from May 21 to 27 could be the reality check they need.

The online test developed by Kidney Health Australia can be taken anywhere, any time, and includes nine questions that help identify your risk of kidney disease. The test will determine whether a follow-up appointment with your GP for a Kidney Health Check is recommended – a simple check that could save your life.

Three in four Australians are at risk of kidney disease with the highest contributing factors being diabetes and high blood pressure.

Kidney disease has no symptoms and 90 per cent of kidney function can be lost without warning, meaning diagnosis is often too late and little can be done at that late stage to avoid kidney failure. However, early detection can slow or even stop the progression of this insidious, incurable, and deadly disease.

Despite this, recent research found that Australians commonly associate early signs of kidney disease with changes to wee. This misconception can lead to fewer people getting their kidneys checked, waiting for symptoms that may not appear, and highlights the importance of this campaign.

**Dr Karen Dwyer**, Nephrologist and Clinical Director at Kidney Health Australia said, "For the first time in 20 years, there are new treatments for kidney disease that can slow down the progression to kidney failure.

"Early detection has never been more important - we have a unique opportunity to change the future for so many Australians. The best thing you can do this Kidney Health Week, is find out if you are one of the three in four Aussies at risk of kidney disease and if so, get a Kidney Health Check with your GP."

In 2019, father of five Shane Jeeves was told his kidney function had deteriorated to just 6 per cent. He had been diagnosed with kidney disease in 2013 but didn't realise there was anything he needed to do – after all, he felt fit and healthy.

Shane wished he had known there were steps that could be taken to manage his diagnosis and slow the progression of the disease. One year later he died from a kidney-related heart attack at the age of 48 leaving behind his wife, Jodie and their five daughters.

Shane's wife, **Jodie Jeeves**, said: "With kidney disease, you really don't know what's going on under the surface.

"Shane was a fit and healthy person, heavily involved in sport, but we didn't know that under it all, his kidneys were failing, probably for years.

"Early detection is so important because the earlier you find out, the more you can educate yourself and the better equipped you are to prolong your life and wellbeing."

Kidney Health Australia's recently released Deloitte Access Economics report highlighted that kidney disease is both a health issue and an economic issue for Australia. The report outlines the need for investment into timely diagnosis and best practice management of chronic kidney disease.

As it stands, chronic kidney disease costs the Australian taxpayer \$9.9 billion annually, \$5.1 billion of which is attributed to lost productivity (reduced employment, absenteeism and presenteeism), with the total cost to the health care system estimated to be \$2.3 billion.

Government investment in targeted early screening and diagnosis could help to avoid 38,200 premature deaths, and for every dollar spent, save the health system \$45 in costs associated with managing kidney failure and associated cardiovascular disease over the next 20 years.

Kidney Health Australia CEO, **Chris Forbes** said, "Chronic kidney disease is an under-diagnosed condition – by the time people notice any symptoms, up to 90 per cent of kidney function is often lost, making it too late to stop or even slow down the disease.

"With three out of four Australians currently at risk, investment in early detection is vital to saving lives, while also reducing the economic burden on the health system and society as a whole.

"We want to make sure everyone has knowledge and awareness of early detection, which could save their life. We encourage everyone to take the two-minute test on the Kidney Health Australia website. It's a simple way to determine your risk of kidney disease and take the appropriate steps to avoid a life, or quality of it, being cut short."

Kidney Health Australia's General Manager, Clinical and Research, **Breonna Robson**, said: "Kidney health is a big issue in Australia – there are around 2 million people affected by kidney disease, and 1.8 million don't know they are living with it. Kidney Health Week is an opportunity to put our kidneys front and centre in the minds of Australians and start a national conversation about what people can do for their kidney health.

"The goal for the week is getting the community to understand whether they're at risk of kidney disease, and if they are, taking action to do something about it."

Kidney Health Week is May 21-27, when local communities across the country will join forces to spread awareness of kidney disease, highlighting that it's more than a wee problem, and encouraging all Australians to take the 2 min online risk test. For more information visit [www.kidney.org.au](http://www.kidney.org.au).

## KEY STATS

- Chronic kidney disease affects more than 2 million Australians – that's one in every 10. This increases to 1 in 5 for First Nations Australians.
- 1.8 million Australians are unaware they have kidney disease.
- 3 in 4 Australians are at risk of kidney disease.

- Around 66 Australians die per day with chronic kidney disease (more than breast and prostate cancer and road traffic accidents)
- Chronic kidney disease contributes to 1 in 6 hospitalisations in Australia.
- Chronic kidney disease is an underlying cause in 11 per cent of all deaths in Australia.
- The number of Australians receiving either dialysis or a kidney transplant has more than doubled between 2000 and 2020 from 11,700 to 27,702.
- Chronic kidney disease cost Australia \$9.9billion each year, including \$2.3billion to our healthcare system – an unnecessary cost if we diagnose kidney disease earlier.
- For every dollar invested in targeted early detection of chronic kidney disease, \$45 in costs are saved in the health system.
- If detected early, deterioration in kidney function can be reduced by up to 50 per cent.
- Targeted detection of kidney disease is via a Kidney Health Check through a GP that includes a blood pressure check, a blood test for kidney function and a urine test to look for any leakage of protein.
- New treatments can slow the progression of chronic kidney disease by up to 15 years.

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**Kidney Health Australia** is the recognised voice for kidney disease in Australia, striving to create a healthier community through increased awareness and early detection of kidney disease. KHA connects kidney consumers to vital resources and services to help them manage their condition and achieve a better quality of life. They work with health professionals and researchers to develop better treatments so that one day, every Australian will have healthy kidneys.

To find out more visit [www.kidney.org.au/kidneyhealthweek](http://www.kidney.org.au/kidneyhealthweek)

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