

## How to find out more about AKI

- 🍷 [www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk](http://www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk)
- 🍷 NICE guidelines and quality standards
- 🍷 NHS England website
- 🍷 British Renal Society
- 🍷 The Renal Association
- 🍷 Kidney Research UK
- 🍷 National Kidney Federation
- 🍷 British Kidney Patient Association
- 🍷 Your professional society or college

AKI is a challenge for us all. It is a cause of excess harm and death to our patients yet in many instances we can stop it happening or improve outcomes. Work with us to make sure you know all you need to know and we'll aim high to lower the numbers.

We will shortly be able to signpost you to nationally endorsed training on the prevention, identification and management of AKI. We are looking to recognise useful educational resources that can be shared across the wider health and care sector. Keep an eye on our website for the latest information where you can register for automatic updates.

# ‘THINK KIDNEYS’

## About Think Kidneys

Think Kidneys is the NHS's programme for tackling acute kidney injury. It is a collaboration between NHS England and The UK Renal Registry.

Our overall aims are to reduce avoidable harm and death for people with acute kidney injury, and to improve care for patients whether in hospital or at home. To do this we need to engage with all health and care professionals to make the prevention, detection and treatment of AKI a priority and keep it front of mind.

We'll be encouraging you to take up learning opportunities we'll be highlighting and apply the changes to your practice to improve patient care and reduce the harm done by avoidable incidences of AKI.

We are developing our website [www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk](http://www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk) with useful information, tools and resources and this will expand over the coming months. You can register to keep in touch with our activities and join our forums to have your say on many topics around AKI.

This year our priority is reaching health and care professionals. Get in touch via our website if you would like to know more and follow us on:



‘THINK KIDNEYS’

NHS



Think Kidneys is a national programme led by NHS England in partnership with UK Renal Registry

# ‘THINK KIDNEYS’



Information on the NHS campaign to improve the care of people at risk of, or with, acute kidney injury

[www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk](http://www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk)

# Acute kidney injury (AKI) is common, serious and harmful.

We know quite a lot about AKI, the havoc it wreaks on lives and the damage it does.....

- **100,000 deaths** a year are associated with AKI
- **up to a third** of those deaths could be avoided
- **1 in 5 people** admitted to hospital as an emergency has AKI
- **over 60% of AKI** starts in the community
- **the NHS** is the first health system in the world to tackle AKI
- **the additional cost of AKI** to the NHS is estimated at £500m each year

**AKI is recognised as a patient safety priority by NHS England.**

The Think Kidneys programme will draw together existing good practice, resources, tools and education, and develop new materials where we identify something is missing. The aim is to raise awareness of AKI among health and care professionals so that care for patients with AKI is transformed and rates of AKI are reduced.

## You and AKI

Wherever you work and whatever your role in health or care you should be aware of AKI so that we can work together to reduce the risk of AKI and the number of patients suffering as a result of AKI.

Think Kidneys' vision is a future in which health and care professionals think about kidney status in the same way that they do now about blood pressure and heart rates.

**How much do you know about AKI?**

**Do you need to know more?**

**Do you know where to learn more about AKI?**

**Do you know what causes it.....how it's detected.....how it's treated?**

**Do you know what you can do to help prevent it?**

**Do you know who is most at risk?**

**Health and care professionals need to be well informed and proactive, to understand patient risk, prevention, how to recognise AKI and help the patient to recover.**

## Cause and Risk

The causes of AKI are many and varied and occur most often in patients with co-morbidities, living with long term conditions although it can affect anyone.

It can occur as a result of an infection causing stress on the kidneys, dehydration reducing the flow of blood to the kidneys or the altered effect of medication caused by illness, surgical or radiological procedures.

The most common underlying risk factors for AKI for a patient include:

- **pre-existing chronic kidney disease**
- **age** – patients aged 75 years or over
- **congestive cardiac failure**
- **atherosclerotic peripheral vascular disease**
- **Diabetes Mellitus**
- **liver disease**

AKI may then be triggered by:

- **sepsis or infections**
- **hypovolaemia** – dehydration, bleeding
- **hypotension** – for example after a serious heart attack
- **certain medications or drugs** – this includes prescribed and over the counter medicines

Some drugs may need to be suspended around the time of surgery or for certain radiological (contrast) procedures and the pharmacist in hospital, as part of the multiprofessional team, can advise the best course of action and make sure the patient is aware why this is happening.

In order to recognise AKI, an algorithm standardising the definition of AKI has now been agreed and issued under an NHS England NHS Patient Safety Alert. This is being integrated into biochemistry laboratory systems as a means of systematically identifying cases of AKI across the hospital. This provides the ability to ensure that a timely and consistent approach is taken across the NHS for the detection and diagnosis of AKI.