What causes kidney problems?

Kidney disease is serious. It’s harmful and changes lives. Protect your kidneys as if your life depended on it: because it does!

Find out how to keep your kidneys healthy and safe
www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk
You can become a donor and help save a life by signing up at: www.organdonation.nhs.uk

One of the most common causes of kidney disease is diabetes. But there are many others including genetic and inflammatory conditions, blockages of urine flow and high blood pressure that can be a cause and/or consequence of kidney problems.

About 1 in 10 people has some form of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). CKD is a long term loss of kidney function which can be harmful. Not all CKD gets worse but it can lead to kidney failure. CKD also increases the risk of heart attack or stroke and increases the risk of acute kidney injury.

Acute Kidney Injury (AKI) is serious and can occur when a person is unwell. AKI is a quick reduction in kidney function. Finding AKI in the early stages is very important as it can make other health problems more difficult to treat.

Of emergency admissions to hospital 1 in 5 people have AKI. AKI can occur after major surgery or with heart problems. Up to 100,000 deaths in hospital in the UK each year are associated with AKI. It causes harm and suffering and costs a lot.

Why you need to think kidneys

If you are worried about your kidneys, your GP and think out screening is necessary.
Always ‘Think Kidneys’ when booking your GP appointment.
Your kidneys are remarkable and can look after you at just 10% functionality.
AKI often gets better and can even recover fully as the underlying problems are treated.

Kidney problems are caused by a variety of factors. The most common causes are diabetes and high blood pressure.

The symptoms of kidney problems can include:

- Tiredness
- Frequent headaches
- Loss of appetite
- Sleep problems
- Itchy skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Swelling or numbing of the hands or feet
- Passing urine more (especially at night) or less often than usual
- Darkening / lightening of the skin
- Muscle cramps

So, it’s important to test regularly to spot problems as soon as possible.

Your kidneys are amazing. They work so hard for you. Look after them and Think Kidneys.

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