

MWANANCHI'S HEALTH CONSULTANCY SERVICES

KIDNEY DISEASE

10 SYMPTOMS OF KIDNEY DISEASE

Many people who have chronic kidney disease don't know it because the early signs can be very subtle. It can take many years to go from chronic kidney disease (CKD) to kidney failure. Most people with CKD live out their lives without ever reaching kidney failure. People with stage 3 CKD have about an 80% chance of never having their kidneys fail. At any stage of kidney disease, knowledge is power. Knowing the symptoms of kidney disease can help you get the treatment you need to feel your best. If you or someone you know has one or more of the following symptoms of CKD, or you worry about kidney problems, see a doctor for blood and urine tests. Remember, many of the symptoms can be caused by other health problems.

The only way to know the cause of YOUR symptoms is to see your doctor.

Symptom 1: Changes in Urination

Kidneys make urine, so when the kidneys are failing, the urine may change. How?

- You may have to get up at night to urinate.
- Urine may be foamy or bubbly.
- You may urinate *more* often, or in *greater amounts* than usual, with pale urine.
- You may urinate *less* often, or in *smaller amounts* than usual, with dark-colored urine.
- Your urine may contain blood.
- You may feel pressure or have difficulty urinating.

Symptom 2: Swelling

Failing kidneys don't remove extra fluid, which builds up in your body causing swelling in the legs, ankles, feet, face, and/or hands.

Symptom 3: Fatigue

Healthy kidneys make a hormone called *erythropoietin* or EPO that tells your body to make oxygen-carrying red blood cells. As the kidneys fail, they make less EPO. With fewer red blood cells to carry oxygen, your muscles and brain tire very quickly. This is *anemia*, and it can be treated.

Symptom 4: Skin Rash/Itching

Kidneys remove wastes from the bloodstream. When the kidneys fail, the build-up of wastes in your blood can cause severe itching.

Symptom 5: Metallic Taste in Mouth/Ammonia Breath

A build-up of wastes in the blood (called *uremia*) can make food taste different and cause bad breath. You may also notice that you stop liking to eat meat, or that you are losing weight because you just don't feel like eating.

Symptom 6: Nausea and Vomiting

A severe build-up of wastes in the blood (*uremia*) can also cause nausea and vomiting. Loss of appetite can lead to weight loss.

Symptom 7: Shortness of Breath

Trouble catching your breath can be related to the kidneys in two ways. First, extra fluid in the body can build up in the lungs. And second, *anemia* (a shortage of oxygen-carrying red blood cells) can leave your body oxygen-starved and short of breath.

Symptom 8: Feeling Cold

Anemia can make you feel cold all the time, even in a warm room.

Symptom 9: Dizziness and Trouble Concentrating

Anemia related to kidney failure means that your brain is not getting enough oxygen. This can lead to memory problems, trouble with concentration, and dizziness.

Symptom 10: Leg/Flank Pain

The most common causes of CKD do not cause any pain. And, much of the pain that is near the kidneys is *not* caused by a kidney problem. But some people who have CKD do have pain. Some people with kidney problems may have pain in the *upper* back (where the kidneys are) or on the same side as the affected kidney.

- **Polycystic kidney disease (PKD)**, which causes large, fluid-filled cysts on the kidneys and sometimes the liver, can cause pain.
- **Kidney infections and kidney stones** can cause severe pain, often in spasms.
- **Bladder infections** can cause burning when you urinate.
- People who have **medullary sponge kidney** say it is painful.