

EARLY SCREENING KEY TO KIDNEY HEALTH

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Chronic kidney disease is often called a “silent illness” because many people do not realise they have it until serious damage has already occurred.



As the world marks World Kidney Day, health experts are warning that millions of people may be living with undiagnosed kidney disease because the condition develops slowly and with few obvious symptoms.

Kidneys play a vital role in keeping the body healthy. They filter waste from the blood, balance fluids and help regulate blood pressure. When they begin to fail, the damage can progress quietly for years. Doctors say many patients are only diagnosed with Chronic Kidney Disease after the condition has already advanced.

According to Dr Olekantse Kakabe, the early warning signs are often mild and easy to overlook. Persistent fatigue, swelling in the legs or around the eyes, changes in urination patterns and high blood pressure that is difficult to control are among the common symptoms. Because these signs develop gradually, many people dismiss them as stress, ageing or lifestyle changes.

Health experts say the biggest drivers of kidney disease today are Diabetes and Hypertension. High blood sugar over time damages the tiny blood vessels in the kidneys that filter waste, while uncontrolled blood pressure puts strain on these delicate vessels and gradually weakens kidney function. Doctors also warn that other hidden risks can contribute to kidney damage. Frequent use of over the counter painkillers without medical supervision can harm the kidneys over time. Smoking, exposure to environmental toxins, heavy metals and inherited conditions such as Polycystic Kidney Disease can also increase the risk.

Because the disease often develops without obvious symptoms, doctors are urging people at risk to undergo regular screening.

Simple blood and urine tests can detect kidney problems early and allow treatment to begin before severe damage occurs.

For patients with advanced kidney failure, Dialysis may be required to remove waste from the body. Specialists say dialysis treatment has improved significantly in recent years, becoming safer and more effective while offering patients better quality of life.

Despite advances in treatment, doctors say prevention and early detection remain the best protection. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, controlling blood sugar and blood pressure, avoiding unnecessary medication and attending regular medical check ups can help protect kidney health.