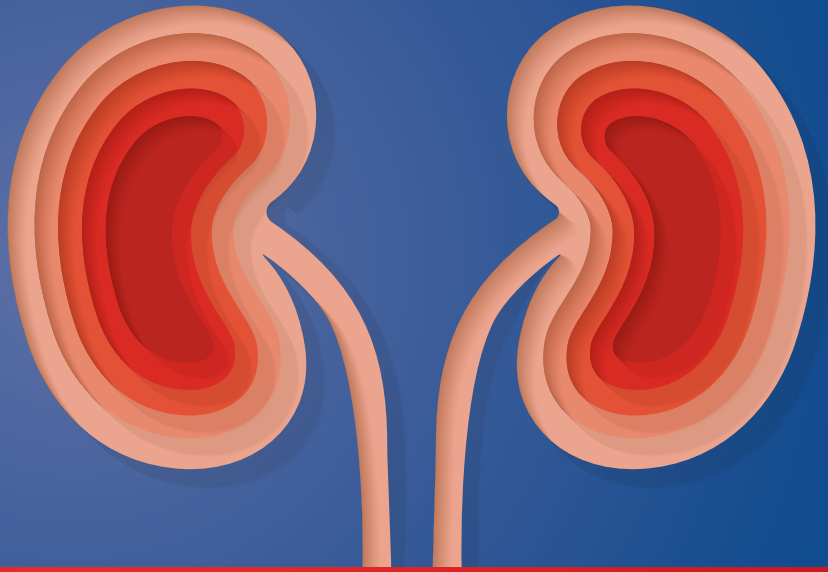


14 March 2026

WORLD KIDNEY DAY



World Kidney Day raises awareness about chronic kidney disease (CKD) and the importance of looking after your kidneys. Kidney disease often develops quietly, with few symptoms in the early stages. But early detection can prevent serious complications.

WHAT IS CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE (CKD)?

CKD is a long-term condition where the kidneys gradually lose their ability to filter waste and excess fluid from the blood. Healthy kidneys:

- Remove toxins and waste products
- Balance fluids and electrolytes
- Help control blood pressure
- Support red blood cell production
- Maintain healthy bones

When kidneys don't work properly, waste builds up in the body, which can affect the heart, brain and other organs.

WHAT CAUSES CKD?

The most common causes are:

- Diabetes** (high blood sugar damages kidney filters)
- High blood pressure** (puts strain on blood vessels in the kidneys)

Other causes include:

- Heart disease
- Recurrent kidney infections
- Autoimmune conditions
- Polycystic kidney disease
- Long-term use of certain pain medications
- Family history of kidney disease

Many people with CKD also have other chronic conditions.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF CKD

In the early stages, CKD may have no symptoms. As the disease progresses, symptoms may include:

- Fatigue or weakness
- Swelling in the feet, ankles or hands
- Changes in urination (frequency, colour or foaming)
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea or loss of appetite
- Muscle cramps
- Difficulty concentrating

Regular screening is important, especially if you have diabetes or high blood pressure.



How to take care of your kidneys

You can reduce your risk of kidney disease or slow its progression by:

- Managing blood sugar and blood pressure and keeping them within your target range.
- Eating a balanced diet - reduce salt intake, limit processed foods and stay hydrated.
- Staying physically active - regular exercise supports heart and kidney health.
- Not smoking as this reduces blood flow to the kidneys.
- Avoiding excessive or long-term use of over-the-counter painkillers unless advised by your doctor.
- Going for regular health checks - simple blood and urine tests can detect kidney problems early.

HOW THE SCHEME CAN HELP YOU

- The Scheme offers all beneficiaries an **annual health check** with their chosen preferred general practitioner (PGP). Your PGP will tailor your annual health check to your age and personal health risks. It is funded from your Preventative Care Benefits and will not reduce your Day-to-Day Benefits.
- All beneficiaries have access to the **three-part Health Risk Assessment (HRA)** designed to give you a clear picture of your overall health and help identify potential risks early so you can take the necessary steps to improve your health outcomes. The HRA can be completed at your GP, a registered nurse, a pharmacist or biokineticist. You can find your nearest BASA biokineticist [here](#). The HRA claiming code is 07343, which must be given to the service providers to ensure your HRA is covered by the Scheme.
- The **GoSmokeFree** Programme is provided by trained clinical nurses at Dis-chem, Clicks, Pick & Pay and independent pharmacies. Virtual consultations are also available. The benefit covers **R3 590** per beneficiary including medicine.

Kidney disease is common, serious and often silent, but it is also preventable and manageable when detected early. This World Kidney Day, know your numbers.

- Check your blood pressure
- Check your blood sugar
- Check your kidney health

Contact your Scheme: 0860 002 109 | mbmed@medscheme.co.za
or scan the QR Code to visit the MBMed Member Portal

