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Detection best form of prevention this Kidney Health Week

Health experts are encouraging people to be aware of the symptoms of kidney disease this Kidney Health Week, from May 25 to 31.

The message is clear: early detection is the best form of prevention of kidney disease.

Acting Director of Renal Services for South Western Sydney Local Health District, Associate Professor Angela Makris, said kidney disease can go undetected for many years.

“A person can lose up to 90 per cent of their kidney function before experiencing any symptoms of kidney disease,” A/Professor Makris said.

“One in nine Australians over the age of 25 has at least one clinical sign of chronic kidney disease, and the sad thing is that kidney-related diseases result in more Australian deaths each year than breast cancer, prostate cancer or road deaths.

“If detected early, many cases of kidney disease can be treated, or the consequences for health minimised.

“But, like many medical conditions, prevention is better than cure,” she said.

“The kidneys act as filters for your body; they remove waste from the blood and remove it in urine, they help to control blood pressure and stimulate red blood cell production and therefore are vital for survival.

“The only active treatments for patients with end stage kidney disease are dialysis or a kidney transplant, and the best form of dialysis is home-based dialysis,” she said.

A/Professor Makris said that there are often no warning signs, but the risk factors for Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) can include:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Obesity
- Family history of CKD
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- Over 50 years of age, or
- Smokers

“If you fall into any of these categories you should see your doctor about a kidney health check.

“A kidney health check involves a blood pressure check, urine test and blood test.

“Understanding your risk and making healthy lifestyle choices will help you to remain in good health,” she said.

For more information about kidney disease and its associated risks factors, visit kidney.org.au