

## **4. Signs & Symptoms of Kidney Disease**

When kidney disease develops over a short period of time it's called Acute Kidney Failure. This is usually caused by an acute insult to the kidneys. Unlike Chronic Kidney Failure, this can usually be treated and cured. Acute kidney diseases often cause symptoms that are quite obvious, the most prominent being:

- blood in the urine
- swelling of the face, feet, ankles and legs
- new onset of high blood pressure
- shortness of breath

The above symptoms are more likely to occur in children because they are more likely to suffer acute kidney diseases. However, that does not mean adults are free of them, so if you note any combination of these symptoms, immediately seek medical attention.

Note that other diseases can also cause similar symptoms, but a simple urine test can indicate if they are due to kidney diseases. For instance, the urine test will indicate if albumin (protein) and blood are present in the urine, as they imply the presence of kidney diseases. A blood test can also show how well your kidneys are performing their main function of eliminating waste products.

In contrast, many chronic kidney diseases do not manifest clear warning signals in their early stages. There may be loss of appetite, mild swelling in the legs, and tiredness. It is not uncommon for these symptoms to be so mild or non-specific that they are ignored over long periods of time.

In fact, some people with chronic kidney disease do not have any symptoms in the initial stages. But as kidney function declines, symptoms may include:

- fatigue
- frequent headaches
- loss of appetite (anorexia)
- sleep problems (insomnia)
- itchy skin
- frequent urination or urinary retention
- nausea or vomiting
- swelling or numbness of the hands and feet
- darkening of the skin
- muscle cramps