

LEADING ARTICLE

Kidney Health for Children: Early Detection Starts in Schools

Shireen Afroz

Every year on the second Thursday of March, the world comes together to celebrate World Kidney Day, a global campaign aimed at raising awareness about the importance of our kidneys. In March 13, 2025 - the second Thursday in March, the spotlight shines even brighter with a powerful and simple question: "Are Your Kidneys OK? Detect Early, Protect Kidney Health." This year's theme turns the spotlight to one of the most overlooked age groups when it comes to kidney health in children.

Kidneys, though small, are mighty organs that work 24/7 to filter waste, balance fluids, and regulate blood pressure. But how often do children or even their parents stop to think about whether their kidneys are healthy?

This year's World Kidney Day aims to change that. With fun-filled educational programs, interactive school activities, and engaging health check-ups across the globe, the "Kidney Health for Children" campaign is bringing critical awareness to schools, communities, and homes.

Why Focus on Children?

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) isn't just an adult problem. Congenital conditions, urinary tract infections, dehydration, obesity, and poor dietary habits can affect kidney function even in early life. Yet, symptoms are often silent making prevention and early education essential.

By teaching children about kidney health early on, we plant the seeds for a lifetime of healthy choices. This includes staying hydrated, eating a balanced diet low in salt and sugar, getting regular physical activity, and avoiding unnecessary medications that can harm kidneys.

What's happening around the World?

Countries around the globe are rolling out events with a child-friendly twist:

- Kidney Health Fairs at schools with games and quizzes
- "Water First!" Challenges to promote hydration
- Cartoon Explainers and Puppet Shows about how kidneys work
- Free Health Screenings and fun workshops for parents and kids alike
- Kidney Hero Awards honoring schools and students who promote kidney-friendly habits

Doctors and healthcare workers are also visiting schools to talk to kids in a language they understand using colorful visuals and relatable stories to explain how these "bean-shaped filters" help keep us healthy.

The Takeaway Message

As we observe World Kidney Day 2025, the question "Are Your Kidneys Okay?" is not just a medical inquiry it's a call for curiosity, education, and action. It's a reminder to check in, ask questions, and take steps, no matter how small, to protect these vital organs.

By nurturing kidney awareness in children, we are investing in a healthier, more informed generation one that won't have to ask too late whether their kidneys are okay.

Let's make World Kidney Day a turning point for young lives because healthy kids mean healthy futures.

Health Screening Report - WKD 2025, Gazipur, Dhaka, Bangladesh

On World Kidney Day 2025, our team of doctors, nurses, and technicians conducted a full-day school

health screening at a school in Kona Bari Nazardighi Nader Ali School High , Gazipur, Dhaka. A total of 139 children, aged between 4 and 17 years, were examined. The age distribution was as follows:

- Under 5 years: 6 children
- 5-10 years: 26 children
- Over 10 years: 107 children

The male-to-female ratio among participants was 71:68.

Of the 139 children screened, the findings were:

Bedwetting: 2.8% of children experienced this issue.

Hypertension: (overall prevalence: 9.35%).

- Elevated blood pressure was noted in 4 children.
- Stage 1 hypertension was identified in 8 children.
- Stage 2 hypertension was found in 1 child

Urinalysis Findings:

- Microscopic hematuria in 10.57% of participants.
- Leukocyturia in 8.13%.
- Proteinuria (ranging from trace to 2+) in 26.02%.
- Nitrate positivity in urine was observed in 2.4% of the children.

Summary & Observations

The screening revealed that a notable fraction of the children had abnormalities requiring further attention, particularly concerning blood pressure and urine analyses. Proteinuria was the most common finding, followed by microscopic hematuria,

leukocyturia, and elevated blood pressure. These results highlight the importance of early detection and follow-up care to manage potential kidney and cardiovascular concerns in school-aged children.

Acknowledgment

We sincerely thank Dr. Abu Hasnat, Dr. Gulshan Nigur Choudhury, Dr. Tarannum Khandaker, Dr. Farhana Yasmin, Dr. Jannatul Ferdous, Dr. Sukriti Baroi, along with all resident medical officers and postgraduate students from the Department of Paediatric Nephrology at Bangladesh Shishu Hospital & Institute, for their active role in the World Kidney Day 2025 celebration. Their support helped promote the goals of this important initiative. We also deeply appreciate the hard work of the nursing staff and dialysis technicians, whose dedication to patient care and public awareness truly reflects the spirit of teamwork behind this campaign.

References

1. World Kidney Day. Are your kidneys OK? Detect early, protect kidney health. Brussels: World Kidney Day; 2025 Mar 13 [cited 2025 Aug 29]. Available from: <https://www.worldkidneyday.org/2025-campaign/>.
2. International Society of Nephrology. World Kidney Day initiative. Brussels: ISN; 2025 Mar 13 [cited 2025 Aug 29]. Available from: <https://www.theisn.org/initiatives/world-kidney-day/>.
3. Josh J. General Knowledge. New Delhi: Jagran Prakashan Ltd.. Available from: <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge>.