

Kidney Cancer Diagnosis



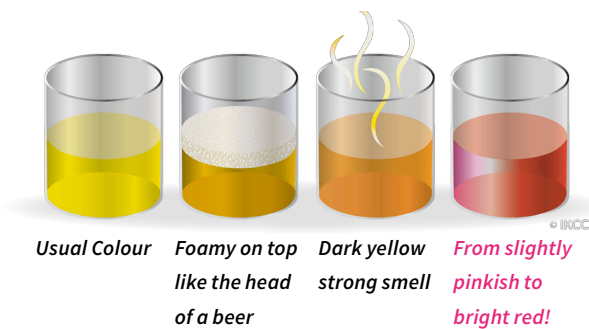
How do people find out they have kidney cancer?

Most kidney cancers do not cause symptoms; they are found incidentally during a scan, X-ray or ultrasound that was ordered for another problem. When kidney cancer does cause symptoms these can be non-specific, that is, many of the symptoms that kidney cancer might cause can be mistakenly attributed to other causes, like a urine infection or a muscle twinge.

Most kidney cancer does not cause pain until advanced stages when it has started to spread. Many people with kidney cancer are not aware they have a tumour until they have a test for another health problem.

Always talk to your doctor if you are experiencing any of these signs or symptoms:

- Blood or changes in urine colour to dark, rusty or brown in the urine (haematuria)



- Lower back, abdominal or flank pain which is not linked to an injury
- Abdominal pain (stomach area)
- Weight loss
- Newly developed high blood pressure
- Constant tiredness
- Fever or night sweats which are not linked with any other conditions

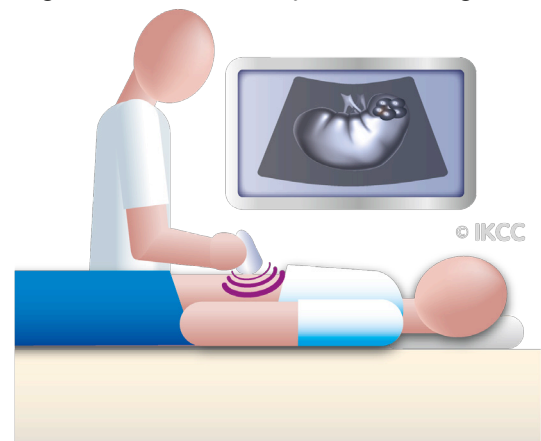
All of these symptoms can also be caused by other diseases. If you have any of these symptoms it is important to see your doctor so you can find out what's causing them.

Kidney cancer is most often detected by chance, but if you have some of the symptoms listed above, speak with your doctor. As with all cancers, early detection can improve the chance of successful treatment and long-term outcomes. Your doctor may use different approaches, tests and investigations to diagnose kidney cancer, depending on the symptoms you display.

The most common tests for kidney cancer

The most common tests that may be ordered include:

- **Ultrasound:** A type of scan where a probe is slid over the skin and where the x-ray team looks for irregularities in the kidney and other organs.



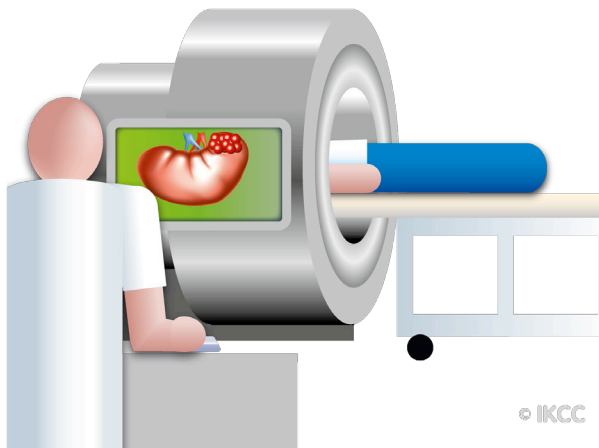
Ultrasound

- **MRI / CT Scans:** Computed tomography (CT) scan or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans can be used to get detailed pictures of organs in the body. This can help characterise a lump in the kidney if one is found.
- **Chest x-ray:** An x-ray of organs and bones within the chest.
- **Urine test (urinalysis):** The most common symptom and sign of a kidney tumour is blood in the urine. This test can also detect other irregularities in the urine such as protein.

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- **Blood tests:** Chemical tests of the blood can detect findings associated with kidney cancer.
- **Bone scan:** A small amount of radioactive material is injected into a vein and travels through the blood-stream to the bones so the scanner can detect if cancer has spread to the bones.



CT-Scan

The majority of kidney cancers are initially discovered by scans (ultrasound, CT scan, or MRI), showing something like a “lump” on the kidney. This does not prove it is kidney cancer however, and it must be examined under the microscope to be sure.

Sometimes your doctor may be so suspicious they recommend immediate surgery; other times your doctor might order a biopsy. During a biopsy, a thin needle is used to remove some cells from the tumour. A doctor will then look at the cells to see if they are cancerous or not. Up to 20% of small kidney masses (or lumps) are non-cancerous.



Good to know!

Biopsy

The removal of cells or tissues for examination by a pathologist. The pathologist may study the tissue under a microscope or perform other tests on the cells or tissue.

Pathologist

A doctor who identifies diseases by studying cells and tissues under a microscope.

Radiologist

A doctor who specializes in diagnosing disease by using procedures such as x-rays, ultrasounds, CT scans and MRI.

Surgery

A procedure to remove or repair a part of the body or to find out whether disease is present. An operation.

Symptom

An indication that a person has a condition or disease. Some examples of symptoms are headache, fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and pain.

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