

FACTUM

Kidney Health Awareness Showing Improvement

Despite significant improvements from 2024, nearly half of Canadians (47%) remain uncertain about their kidney disease risk

Toronto, Canada, September 3, 2026 — While awareness of kidney disease has shown marked improvement in recent years, substantial knowledge gaps remain, according to a new poll conducted on behalf of The Kidney Foundation of Canada. Half of Canadians (50%, a 5-point improvement over 2024) report knowing nothing about kidney disease. Nearly as many (47%, a 5-point improvement over 2024) remain unsure whether they are at risk — a level consistent with 2022 (48%). These findings demonstrate ongoing challenges in public understanding about kidney disease, its risk factors and its effects, despite incremental progress.

Awareness Levels Show Improvement but Remain Limited

Although awareness remains low, there are improvements compared to prior years. Half of Canadians (50%) report knowing nothing about kidney disease, which represents an improvement from 55% in 2024. Despite this progress, awareness remains particularly limited among older populations, as Boomers (60%) are significantly more likely than Gen Z (46%), Millennials (42%), and Gen X (49%) to report having no knowledge of kidney disease. At the same time, 23% of Canadians (+2 from 2024) say they personally know someone with kidney disease.

Notably, men's awareness has improved over time, with the share reporting a lack of knowledge improving from 67% in 2022 to 57% in 2024 and approaching 52% in 2026.

Basic Kidney Function Recognized, but Detailed Knowledge Still Limited

Canadians demonstrate a general understanding of kidney function, but their knowledge lacks depth and specificity. Overall, most show some awareness of kidney function; 63% correctly identify that kidneys filter or cleanse toxins from blood. When asked about kidney disease, 5% mention potential causes, highlighting a significant gap in foundational knowledge. Awareness of kidney disease indicators is also limited, with 17% identifying signs such as kidney damage or reduced function (8%). One in ten (10%) know that it's serious or that it can be fatal; 2% reference kidney failure specifically and 3% identify kidney stones.

FACTUM

Public Understanding of Kidney Disease Outcomes Remains Unclear

Canadians exhibit considerable uncertainty regarding kidney disease outcomes and treatment realities. Less than four in ten (38%, 5 points less than in 2024) believe there is no cure for kidney disease, with this perception rising to 48% among Gen X. Meanwhile, 44% (+2 from 2024, compared to 43% in 2022) say they do not know whether a cure exists. A smaller proportion (18%) believe there is a cure, with this belief more common among younger Canadians, including 24% of Gen Z and 21% of Millennials, compared to 10% of Gen X and 16% of Boomers. Knowledge about the management of kidney disease also remains limited, as 10% mention treatment. Women (15%) are significantly more likely than men (6%) to discuss treatments such as dialysis, while only 4% of Canadians indicate that kidney disease may require a transplant.

Personal Risk Perception Remains Low Despite Widespread Uncertainty

There is a clear disconnect between awareness and perceived personal risk of kidney disease. Only one in ten Canadians (10%) believe they are at risk, while nearly half (47%) report that they do not know whether they are at risk, representing a 5-point decrease from 2024. Gender differences are evident, as men (13%) are more likely than women (8%) to believe they are at risk, while women are more likely to say they are not at risk (46% compared to 37% of men). These findings underscore the need for improved education and clearer communication regarding risk factors.

Addressing Awareness Gaps Remains a National Priority

Taken together, these findings reveal a persistent gap between awareness, understanding, and action when it comes to kidney health in Canada. While improvements are evident in several areas, including increased awareness (55%, up from 50%), significant challenges remain. Half of Canadians still lack basic knowledge, nearly half (47%) remain unsure of their risk, and only 10% perceive themselves as at risk.

Addressing these gaps through targeted education, improved visibility, and stronger regional engagement will be critical to advancing kidney health awareness and encouraging meaningful action across the country.

About the Study



FACTUM

These are the findings of an Ipsos survey conducted on behalf of The Kidney Foundation of Canada. Fieldwork was conducted between May 9 to June 1, 2026. A total of n=1001 Canadians aged 18+ participated in the survey which was fielded via the Ipsos' panel. Quotas and weighting were used to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. This survey has a credibility interval of +/- 3.8 per cent 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had all Canadian adults 18+ been surveyed.

For more information on this Factum, please contact:

Sean Simpson
Senior Vice President, Ipsos Public Affairs
Sean.Simpson@ipsos.com

About Ipsos

Ipsos is one of the largest market research and polling companies globally, operating in 90 markets and employing nearly 20,000 people.

Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. Our 75 business solutions are based on primary data from our surveys, social media monitoring, and qualitative or observational techniques.

“Game Changers” – our tagline – summarizes our ambition to help our 5,000 clients navigate with confidence our rapidly changing world.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has been listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120, Mid-60 indices, STOXX Europe 600 and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP

www.ipsos.com

