

KIDNEY

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Cover Photo: Kevin Mallia reached the summit of Mount Chimborazo in Ecuador

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Living Well with Kidney Disease

The New Year for many is a time of reflection and renewal. After an exciting year celebrating The Kidney Foundation's 60th anniversary, we're energized and ready for another year of supporting people throughout their journey with kidney disease. Despite so many accomplishments, there is still much work to be done.

We've filled this issue of Kidney Living with tips and stories to help you live your best life with kidney disease. Celebrity baker, Anna Olson, has shared a special blog and recipe to help warm you on those cool winter days. Plan to join the Living Well with Kidney Disease | Navigating the Kidney Journey Virtual Patient Forum (page 10) in February to have the opportunity to listen and learn from Anna herself. Sessions for this popular virtual event also include Working on Dialysis, Finding a Living Kidney Donor, Mental Health and more!

If managing stress in different ways is a goal for you in 2025, check out the tips on page 11. Thinking about incorporating more physical activity into your daily routine? You will want to check out the feature on page 16 to learn about the differences between exercise and physical activity.

In this issue, we're also highlighting some amazing stories of people who continue to reach new heights and chase their dreams while living well with kidney disease. Piko Mbolekwa and Kevin Mallia literally climbed mountains to raise kidney health awareness and funds to improve the lives of others. Mike Moore shares how he doesn't let dialysis slow him down and Chris Stadnyk shares his personal story of perseverance in the face of a shocking diagnosis. Mary Ann shares her story as she celebrates the 50th anniversary of her transplant from her sister Margaret, one of the first live-related transplants in London.

Through it all The Kidney Foundation remains by your side, ready to help you every step of the way.

Yours truly,



Trish Reynolds, Editor
The Kidney Foundation of Canada
Ontario Branch

Reaching New Heights

By Erika Muscat

Kevin and Piko, two supporters of The Kidney Foundation, have at least one thing in common: ambition. Earlier this year, Piko climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, reaching the summit on June 15th, which also happened to be his 64th birthday. Then on September 26, Kevin reached the summit of Mount Chimborazo in Ecuador.

Their motivations may have been different but their ambitions very similar. Their stories are ones of honour and courage. Let's start from the beginning.



Piko Mbolekwa's Story

Piko and Ian were lifelong friends. When Piko learned that Ian's kidneys were failing as a result of polycystic kidney disease, he decided to speak with his family doctor to learn more about the process to find out if he might be a compatible donor.

In February 2005, Piko donated his kidney to Ian. Ian lived 19 vibrant years with his transplant but sadly passed away from an unrelated illness in September 2023. Piko says, "Ian and I knew each other for almost 50 years - the last 19 of which we were eternally bound through a kidney."

Shortly after the transplant, Piko began sharing his experience and offered support to others through The Kidney Foundation's peer support program. He spoke with others who were contemplating living kidney donation.

Piko decided to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in memory of his dear friend Ian and fundraised for The Kidney Foundation during the training process, raising a total of \$10,841! When asked why climb a mountain, Piko shared that he did it as a personal goal for himself but also because he wanted to raise awareness - "kidney disease doesn't have a high profile like other diseases."

Kevin Mallia's Story

Kevin's journey with kidney disease began in adolescence. At age 16 a blood test revealed his kidneys were failing and he was eventually diagnosed with Juvenile Nephronophthisis.

Piko Mbolekwa



By age 18, Kevin's kidney function was down to two percent. He was in his first year of college and chose to do peritoneal dialysis so that he could continue 'a somewhat normal life'. Kevin finished his first year of college on a Friday, and the following Monday he received a kidney transplant from his mother, Josie.

This year marks 25 years with his transplant and he felt he wanted to do something special to mark the milestone. He's always been adventurous – "I do a lot of unconventional things," he says, "such as snowboarding to work, sky diving, scuba diving and more." So, it only seemed fitting that he climb a mountain in honour of his 25th transplantiversary!

Kevin did indeed fulfill his 'Climb to Inspire' and summited Mount Chimborazo, 6,270 metres above sea level. His mother Josie, and wife Paulina were there to celebrate when he finished his descent. Part of this experience was not only intense training, but intense fundraising! Kevin set a goal to raise \$25,000 for The Kidney Foundation. By the time of his climb, he surpassed that goal, raising more than \$26,000!

When asked why he chose to take on such an ambitious task, he said his goal was simple. He wants to inspire people. "I'm doing it to raise awareness and to let people know that it's not a death sentence to have kidney disease. You can still have aspirations and goals."



Kevin Mallia and his wife Paulina

Don't worry – you don't have to climb a mountain to raise money for The Kidney Foundation! Choose to support The Kidney Foundation your way. Setting up a personal fundraising page is as easy as 1-2-3 and we will help you throughout the entire process. So, whether a bowl-a-thon is more your style, or you simply want to raise money for a special occasion, we are here to help you make it happen.

Stay Up to Date on Kidney Foundation News

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Sharing Your Story to Help Others.

Chris' Story

Close your eyes and feel the excitement of Christmas. You're done work and your only responsibility is last-minute Christmas shopping. You go to sleep. You wake up. And you know something terrible has happened. Your vision is distorted. You can't think straight. You know you need help. You're incapable of calling 911, driving or calling a cab. In each moment, life gets worse.

You find a cab. The cab driver helps you find your doctor's office. You have no appointment. The receptionist takes one look at you and calls the doctor. The doctor summons a nurse. And the nurse drives you to the hospital in his car. "There's no time for an ambulance" my doctor says. At Emergency I am told two things. "You're in acute kidney failure" and "today is your lucky day." That's how I met my nephrologist, Dr. Rabin, one of the best nephrologists in Canada, who just happened to be working the Christmas shift.

Despite Dr. Rabin's good humour and bad jokes, I knew things were bad. The mind fog from my rapidly escalating kidney failure didn't prevent me from wanting to protect my mom. I didn't want to frighten her with such bad news. I asked the nurses to call my little brother. Although I believed Dr. Rabin when he assured me, I was going to live, I couldn't bear listening to the nurses talk about dialysis. I mutely watched as my brother started doing all the talking and listening. My brother is like my mom. He took great care of me and was with me every step of the way: "Let's take this day by day, Chris. We have time. We don't have to go on dialysis right away." Telling my mom was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. Both my mom and dad were heartbroken.

Fear and disappointment crossed their faces as I told them about my kidney failure, my stroke and our road ahead – dialysis and the dream of a new kidney. A bright spot was my crazy connection with Dr. Rabin, the nephrologist

who first treated me at Christmas. He knew I was a lawn bowler for Team Canada and that my dream was to get well enough to bowl again.

I wanted to go to Australia for the Commonwealth Games and compete with my little brother. Dr. Rabin took my dream and made it his own. Every time I saw Dr. Rabin, he'd say, "Don't worry, Chris. We'll get you there. You'll compete again." Time passed. Dialysis continued. My deathly fear of needles never got better.

I waited for a new kidney for almost three years. And then the call came. In less than 30 hours my life changed completely. I thought of my mom and dad while I prepared for surgery. I recalled the tone of their voices, my parents' fear, when I told them about my kidney disease.

I remembered telling my mom that everything would turn out great and that I had an excellent medical team: "Mom, I'm going to be okay. You'll see." But my mother was no longer with me. Neither was my dad. While I waited those two-and-a-half years for a kidney, I lost both my parents. Mom died two months before I started dialysis. Dad passed away five weeks before my transplant. I wish Mom and Dad could see me today. I wish they could see me once again smiling and enjoying life.

Today I am blessed with a new kidney. Today I am a new kind of normal, a new kind of healthy. And there's more good news: my brother and I did make it to Australia. We competed for Team Canada, just like we'd hoped – another dream come true. Dr. Rabin and I continue our crazy connection. It's like we're long-lost friends. Shortly after my transplant Dr. Rabin called me from Arizona. He had retired but wanted to know everything – how I was feeling, what my plans were.

I've also found a new team of support through The Kidney Foundation. They've helped me in so many ways. Learning you have kidney failure leaves a lot of doubt and many questions, but The Kidney Foundation has helped with many of the answers. It's also been so important to be able to talk to others who understand what I'm going through - that has been an enormous help.

It's a small world and a beautiful world too. I'm grateful to be here, sitting on top of the world. I know my mom and dad are smiling down at me, grateful for all the people, all the love, that helped get me here.



Chris Stadnyk



Peer Support for Home Hemodialysis Patients

By Heidi Westfield

Home hemodialysis can provide more flexibility for kidney patients, but there are some challenges. It requires training, dedication - and can sometimes feel isolating. The Kidney Foundation has launched a peer support group to help Canadians on home hemodialysis – and those considering it - to connect and learn from each other.

The group originally began three years ago in Manitoba and, early this year, expanded to hold online meetings available to patients and caregivers across the country.

The meetings are held once a month. Some of the topics include:

- **Is home hemodialysis the right fit for you?**
- **Travelling while on hemodialysis**
- **How to include family and friends as part of your home dialysis team ?**

Melissa Scott has worked with dialysis patients for more than a decade and has seen the benefits of dialyzing at home. She is the program manager for in-centre hemodialysis and home hemodialysis at Kingston Health Sciences Centre.

“Patients can set their own schedule for when to do dialysis,” Melissa says. *“This allows patients to have more autonomy, and more control over their own daily schedule and care.”*

While home hemodialysis has advantages, she notes there is a lot to learn around setting up the machines and vascular access. Maintaining hemodialysis equipment at home is a big responsibility and patients can get discouraged.

She adds that medical teams are available to answer questions and provide as much training as patients need: *“If people make a decision to stick with it and not to give up, we will continue to work with them until they are ready to do their treatments at home.”*

Salvatore Rocchese opted to try home hemodialysis five years ago, after his first kidney transplant failed.



Salvatore Rocchese

“I liked the idea of doing dialysis in the comfort of my home,” he says. *“I thought that it would be wonderful.”*

While the choice was ultimately a success, the learning curve proved to be challenging. Even after weeks of training on the equipment, he describes his first days of dialyzing at home as “terrifying”.

“The alarms went off a lot on the machine in the beginning,” he recalls. *“My fistula was gigantic and we had some horror movie moments when the bleeding wouldn’t stop. You wonder, am I doing it right? It feels like a lot of pressure.”*

Salvatore has lived with kidney disease all his life and over the years has found peer support helpful. Taking part in group sessions helped lift his mood and gave him strength.

“What was most beneficial for me about the meetings was the hope that they brought. Just hearing people’s stories and what they were going through. We are all brothers and sisters in this chronic kidney disease journey.”

Salvatore now lives with a new kidney transplant and is doing well. Looking back, he says if there had been a support group specifically for home hemodialysis when he started in 2019, he would have signed up right away.

“For sure. Just to talk about the pros and cons of the machine. The alarms and what sets them off,” he says. *“To learn about the experiences of others and share my experiences.”*

Seasoning without Salt: A Chef's Perspective

By Anna Olson

One of the most challenging lessons you learn when attending cooking school is how to season foods properly since it can be so personal, and using salt is at the heart of this lesson. It's also common to find recipes written for the home cook that specify measurements for every ingredient, but then you are left with vague instructions to "season to taste". So what happens when you need to reduce salt in your dishes in order to follow a low-sodium renal diet?

I have good news – removing salt from your food does not mean removing flavour. As a chef, I've learned to appreciate how we taste and enjoy food and layer flavours. When my Dad was diagnosed with kidney disease, my Mom stepped up as cook and caregiver to adjust the family diet, and I helped by giving her some tasty tools to season food without needing to add salt.

Non-salt seasonings can serve as background notes and bolster the primary tastes in a dish and round out flavours, while others add sparkle up front, whetting your palate and inviting another bite. Here are some seasonings that help accomplish this as you prepare your low-sodium meals at home:

To add early in the cooking process:

Fresh thyme	Fresh rosemary
Bay leaf	Lemon or orange zest
Mild paprika	Chili flakes

All of these seasonings are best added early on when making dishes like soups, stews or roasts, since they mellow as they cook. They add lovely background notes to your food without overwhelming the primary elements.

Chefs learn that adding thyme and bay leaf to a chicken stock or a roasting chicken somehow makes the chicken taste more chicken-y. Use a vegetable peeler to peel a few strips of lemon or orange peel to add to a liquid (or use a microplane zester for fine zest). You can place slices of lemon under a roast to let the aromatic oils in the zest infuse into it at it

cooks. Paprika adds a subtle seasoning and pretty colour to dishes, and peppers are very kidney-friendly. Chili flakes can add a spicy kick to dishes, but even just a pinch can make other flavours bigger without adding too much heat.

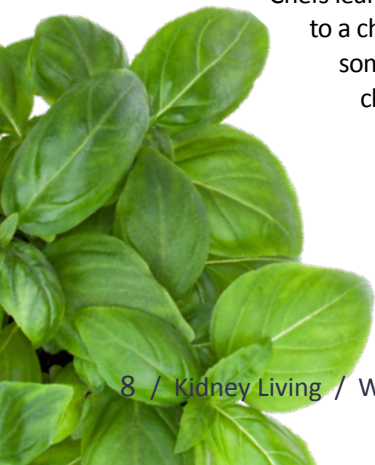
To add right before serving:

Fresh parsley	Fresh chives (or green onion)
Fresh basil	Fresh lemon juice

Delicate fresh herbs like parsley, basil and chives are best added immediately before serving a dish to maximize their seasoning power, since their flavour dissipates when cooked for too long. Parsley is an underutilized herb – in addition to adding colour, it gives dishes a flavour vibrancy yet is more neutral than fresh basil. Chives add a subtle onion flavour to season a dish, and green onion can be used in its place. But lemon juice is the real secret to seasoning without salt. A squeeze of a little fresh lemon juice into any cooked dish right before serving has incredible power. The tartness wakes up flavours and also your palate, yet it fades away quickly leaving you open to taste all of the other components in your dish.

And as a baker, please know that you can omit the salt in almost all of your baking without hurting the workability of a recipe. Except for yeast breads, where the salt controls the fermentation of the yeast, salt is there in baking for the same reason it is in cooking...to season. So you can leave out the salt and instead add a little extra vanilla extract, lemon zest or a pinch of nutmeg.

Lean on these seasoning tips when cooking dishes at home, and if you're going out to eat and asking for no added salt to your meal, remember to ask for a few lemon wedges on the side, so you can add your own flavour sparkle.



Red Bell Pepper Soup with Basil Chicken

By Anna Olson

This vibrantly coloured soup brightens up a chilly day and when topped with cooked chicken dressed with fresh basil, you have a soup that eats like a meal. This was a signature soup recipe on the menu at Inn on the Twenty, where I worked as pastry chef for years before starting my cookbook and television career. We used to buy cases of hothouse bell peppers from local greenhouses to use in various popular dishes.

The use of fresh lemon juice and thyme to season the soup replaces the need for adding salt. And here's a tip...do you know the difference between stock and broth? Typically, stock is unseasoned while broth is salted and seasoned, but do read your package labels if using prepared stock, just to make sure it contains no or minimal salt. (Dietitian Tip: Choose a "No Salt Added" broth. Some sodium reduced products use potassium as a substitute for sodium. Avoid products with potassium chloride.)

Makes about 8 cups (2 L) Serves 6 to 8
Prep time: 20 minutes Cook time: 40 minutes

Soup:

2 tsp (10 mL) olive oil
2 medium cooking onions, peeled and diced
1 stalk celery, diced
3 fresh red bell peppers, seeded and diced
1 garlic clove, sliced
2 tsp (10 mL) chopped fresh thyme
4 cups (1 L) unsalted chicken or vegetable stock (homemade or storebought)
½ cup (90 g) basmati or other long grain white rice
Fresh lemon juice and ground black pepper, to taste

Chicken:

2 tsp (10 mL) olive oil
1 lb (450 g) cooked chicken breast, diced
Pinch red pepper chili flakes (optional)
½ cup (125 mL) fresh basil leaves, cut into thin strips (chiffonade)
Fresh lemon juice and ground black pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepot over medium heat. Add the onion and celery and sauté for about 5 minutes, until the onions turn translucent.
 2. Add the red bell peppers, garlic and thyme to the pot, stir for a minute to warm them up and then add the stock and rice. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring this up to a full boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover the pot and gently simmer the soup for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the rice is well-cooked and the peppers are tender.
 3. Use a blender, immersion blender or food processor to purée the soup until it is smooth. Season to taste with lemon juice and ground black pepper. Hold the soup warm while you prepare the chicken.
 4. Heat a sauté pan over medium heat and add the oil. Add the cooked chicken and chili flakes (if using) and stir until it has warmed through. Toss with the basil and season with lemon juice and pepper immediately before serving.
- To serve, ladle the hot soup into bowls and top with a spoonful of the chicken.



**RECIPES & INFO TO
HELP YOU MANAGE
YOUR RENAL DIET**



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Living Well with Kidney Disease Navigating the Kidney Journey

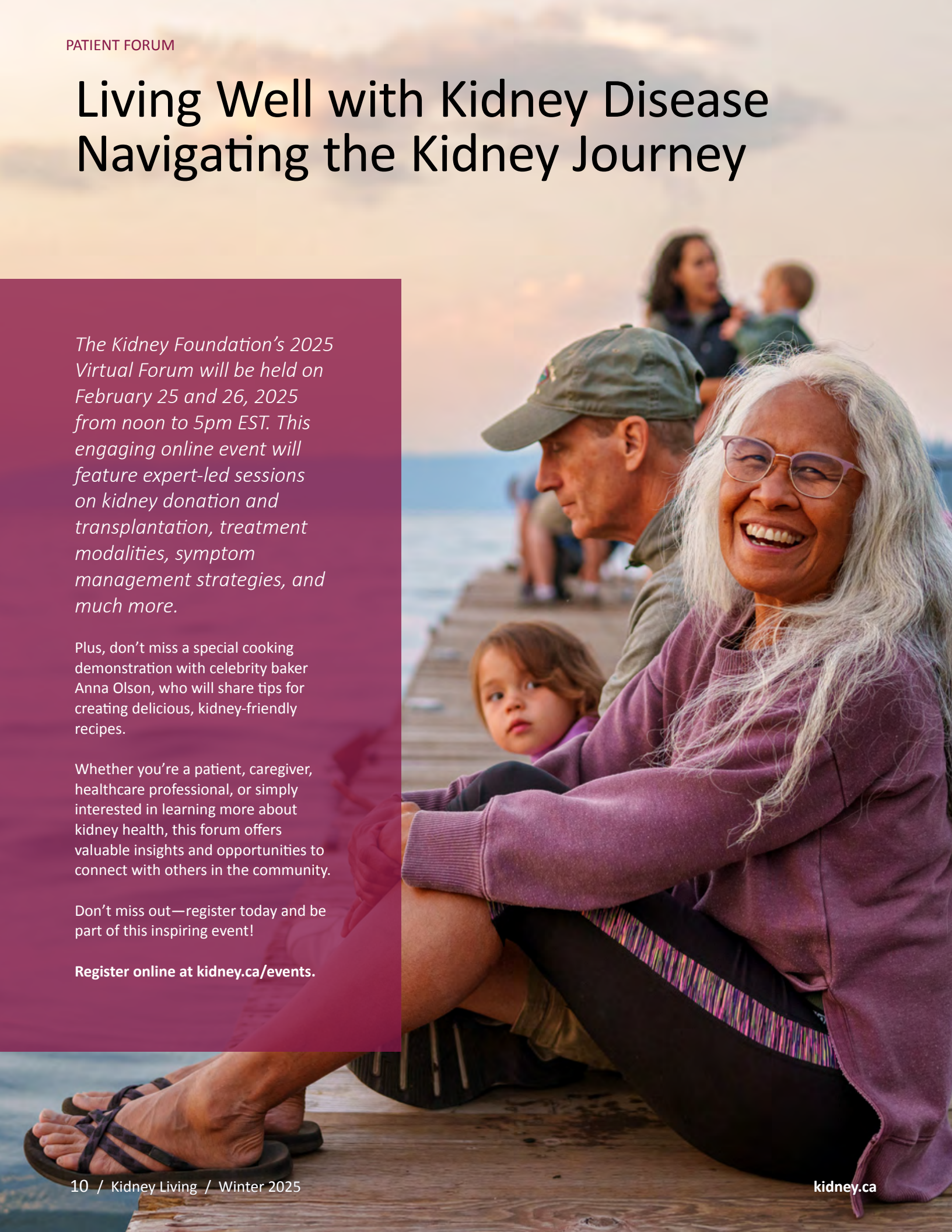
The Kidney Foundation's 2025 Virtual Forum will be held on February 25 and 26, 2025 from noon to 5pm EST. This engaging online event will feature expert-led sessions on kidney donation and transplantation, treatment modalities, symptom management strategies, and much more.

Plus, don't miss a special cooking demonstration with celebrity baker Anna Olson, who will share tips for creating delicious, kidney-friendly recipes.

Whether you're a patient, caregiver, healthcare professional, or simply interested in learning more about kidney health, this forum offers valuable insights and opportunities to connect with others in the community.

Don't miss out—register today and be part of this inspiring event!

Register online at kidney.ca/events.



Practical Stress Management Strategies for Healthy Kidneys

By Michelle Hampson

Everyone who has experienced stress knows that it can be mentally draining, but what's less talked about are the physical impacts that stress can have on the body. For example, stress can weaken the immune system and slow healing. Therefore, finding ways to reduce stress can be very beneficial for a person's overall health, and especially for those living with kidney disease who have the added stress of living with a chronic condition.

Dr. Gavril Hercz is a nephrologist and psychotherapist at Humber River Hospital who specializes on the impact of chronic kidney disease on mental health. He notes that, although it is difficult for researchers to study the exact connections between the body and the mind, evidence shows that stress can lead to increased blood pressure, blood sugar levels and inflammation in the body, which are all factors known to exacerbate kidney disease.

"Theoretically, stress can aggravate kidney function because of these changes in the body that stress can bring about," explains Dr. Hercz. *"The more we can manage [stress], the less impactful it will be in the long term."*



A key way to manage stress, he emphasizes, is to "put that stress into words". This can be done by writing feelings and thoughts down in a journal, consulting a therapist, or talking with family and friends. It may be especially helpful to talk with peers living with kidney disease who are

going through similar experiences. *"If you're meeting with someone else with kidney disease, you can say here's someone who is doing well and they are going through the same thing that I am - that can be very supportive,"* Dr. Hercz explains, noting that The Kidney Foundation offers various programs related to peer support.



Dr. Hercz also sees a lot of value in some simple activities that people can engage in that are known to reduce stress, such as mindful meditation, deep breathing and exercise like a walk outdoors.

By incorporating mindfulness practices, regular physical activity, and nurturing social connections, individuals can reduce the impact of stress and enjoy not just better mental health, but physical health as well.

"I'm a big proponent of mindful meditation and breathing exercises in terms of grounding yourself. Certainly some form of physical activity is also grounding - just going on walks is actually very helpful."

-Dr. Gavril Hercz

10 Tips to Managing Stress for Kidney Health



Stress, often considered a product of the mind, can have profound effects on the body, including the kidneys.

01

Mindfulness Meditation

Engage in mindfulness meditation to promote relaxation and reduce stress. Focusing on your breath and being present in the moment can help calm the mind and alleviate the physiological effects of stress on the body.

02

Healthy Nutrition

Adopt a balanced and nutritious diet. Certain foods such as those rich in antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids, can have anti-inflammatory effects, supporting overall health, including kidney function.

03

Adequate Sleep

Prioritize quality sleep to allow the body and mind to rejuvenate. Lack of sleep can exacerbate stress and negatively impact overall health, including kidney health.

04

Social Connections

Maintain strong social connections with friends and family. Positive social interactions provide emotional support and can be instrumental in managing stress.

05

Regular Physical Activity

Incorporate regular physical activity into your routine. Exercise is not only beneficial for overall health but releases endorphins, the body's natural stress relievers.



Understanding the mind-body connection and adopting effective stress management techniques is helpful for maintaining healthy kidneys.

06

Deep Breathing Exercises

Practice deep breathing exercises to activate the body's relaxation response. Deep, slow breaths can lower cortisol levels, reduce blood pressure, and promote a sense of calm.

07

Yoga and Tai Chi

Both yoga and tai chi combine physical movement with mindfulness, offering a holistic approach to stress management. These practices promote flexibility, balance, and a sense of inner calm.

08

Limiting Stimulants

Reduce the consumption of stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine, as they can contribute to increased stress levels. Opt for herbal teas or decaffeinated alternatives.

09

Time Management

Organize your schedule effectively to reduce feelings of being overwhelmed. Prioritize tasks, delegate when possible, and allocate time for relaxation and self-care.

10

Professional Support

Seek professional support if you're struggling with chronic stress. A mental health professional can provide coping strategies and support tailored to your individual needs.

Tania's Story



“The energy in the operating room was so positive when I was about to have my transplant. It was one of the best healthcare experiences I ever had.” - Tania

The feeling of pure gratitude struck me in December 2021 when I received a kidney transplant. I had always known a transplant might be in my future. Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD) runs in my family. The genetic condition causes the kidneys to develop cysts and become damaged, leading to kidney failure and more than half of my paternal relatives live with it. Because of that, my family has special insight into how kidney disease treatment and care have changed over the years.

Back in the late 1970s, my uncle who lived with PKD went through home peritoneal dialysis. In those days, there was no machine to help the process. A patient used medical bags and gravity to dialyze. It was time-consuming, uncomfortable, and far less manageable than the dialysis I would later experience.

Before my transplant, I was on overnight peritoneal dialysis at home. It was a simple process that allowed me to focus on my life throughout the day. My uncle passed away in 1981 and I can't help wondering what he would think of today's version of dialysis!

Even though dialysis was easier for me than the generation before, my quality of life suffered in the face of kidney failure. I barely had the energy to get out and play with my young son and it was tricky to get away from home

for more than a few hours. Arranging dialysis on even a short trip was challenging. But that all changed when a deceased donor's kidney turned out to be a match for me. My organ donor and their family gave me a precious gift that changed my life overnight. I'll never lose sight of how thankful I am. I can only imagine how difficult that time must have been for my donor's family—and you'll hear that from a lot of organ transplant recipients.

My dad, aunt, and brother had kidney transplants from deceased donors and they said they felt the same way—a combination of joy for the new chance at life and grief for the person who gave it to them. Every year on my birthday and the anniversary of my transplant, I light a candle for my donor to honour their memory and show my eternal gratitude.

I'm also thankful for The Kidney Foundation of Canada and its dedicated supporters. For decades they have worked together to power research and support for people impacted by kidney disease. They are a big part of the reason why my siblings and I living with PKD can look forward to better treatment options and better transplant survival rates than previous generations. And I know I can count on The Kidney Foundation to keep standing behind researchers as they make even bigger



breakthroughs to give people with chronic kidney disease a better quality of life. Unfortunately, right now, there is no cure for kidney failure.

I spent four years on dialysis before my match was found. And now, post-transplant, I can't help but think of all the people still waiting. That's why joining The Kidney Foundation to raise awareness about kidney disease and organ donation is so important to me. I want to help the organization light the way to a cure. And I want to encourage people to become organ donors and even consider becoming living donors because right now, transplantation is one of the best treatments available for people living with kidney disease. I'm living proof of that.

My life today is wonderful. I can eat most foods again, I can travel internationally, get out of town for the weekends, and most importantly, I can be a more active mom. Playing hockey and swimming with my son means the world to me. For too long I missed out on these simple pleasures.

It's been 60 years of progress in kidney disease care and I can't wait to see what other breakthroughs are yet to occur in the decades to come.



Hoffman family at 2023 Kidney Walk in Pembroke



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Physical Activity vs Exercise

by Ryley Carr, Clinical Exercise Physiologist

Let's be honest, for some of us—maybe even many of us—setting aside time in our day for routine exercise is an effort in itself. Even if we aren't juggling jobs, children, grandchildren, errands and everything in between, getting on a treadmill for a prescribed amount of time may feel daunting. And for those of us with mobility issues, exercise can take on a whole new meaning.

That's why this winter, we're embracing the concept of physical activity, which encompasses a broader range of movements that can be incorporated into our daily routines, and working in physical activity through achievable amounts when we can.

Physical activity involves incorporating physical movements into our everyday lives, such as walking, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, shovelling snow, or playing with children or pets. These simple activities may not seem as rigorous as a dedicated exercise routine, but they offer numerous benefits. Like saving our pennies for a rainy day, every little bit adds up and as a result it increases energy expenditure, improves cardiovascular health, enhances mobility and flexibility, and reduces the risk of chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, kidney disease, and heart disease.

We aren't giving up on exercise totally this winter. After all, structured exercise routines, such as aerobics, yoga (or chair yoga and chair aerobics for those with limited mobility), or strength training help to build muscle strength, enhance bone density, reduce stress and anxiety, and promote better sleep. Furthermore, exercise often offers a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction, as individuals can set goals and track their progress over time.

Whatever you choose to do, finding activities we genuinely enjoy sets us up for greater success. A scheduled weeknight walk with a friend, a game of indoor tennis, gentle snowshoe, or dusting off the bike for a peddle up and down the street can all be fun things to look forward to and help maintain long-term commitment.

"Before being diagnosed with kidney disease, I was always up doing something. I am a high-energy person," says Dan Reddy, who is also kidney patient. "Now that I

go to the renal clinic at the hospital three nights a week for my dialysis treatment, I am much more tired. But my wife still makes sure I build movement into my daily routine through walking and gardening and it helps a lot."

Kidney patient, Brenda Brown, echoes what the benefits of movement and how it transformed her life "When I was on dialysis I found I was tired, and the thought of moving, let alone exercising, was unappealing and at times impossible. Then I discovered yoga and was able to incorporate it into my dialysis runs. It changed my life, truly and set me on a new path, and today I am very active, including teaching yoga and participating in the Kidney March."

While both physical activity and exercise have their merits, finding the right balance between the two is crucial for overall well-being. Incorporating regular exercise sessions into your weekly routine ensures that you reap the specific benefits associated with structured physical activity.

Physical Activity Tips

- Stand instead of sitting while texting or talking on the phone
- Take stairs instead of the elevator where available
- Take regular breaks from the computer or consider a standing desk
- Join a walking group
- Handwash pots and pans instead of using the dishwasher
- Move the garbage can away from your desk
- Do thirty seconds of toe touches or arm stretches every hour
- Tap your feet or scrunch your toes while reading
- Park farther away the store
- Stand on one foot while brushing your teeth



Transplant Recipient Marking 50 Years with Sister's Donor Kidney

Margaret & Mary Ann

Mary Ann Crossett is preparing to celebrate an incredible milestone. The Aylmer, Ontario woman, now in her seventies, is reaching the 50th anniversary of her kidney transplant. Her sister, Margaret, chose to donate a kidney to her back in 1975. It is a remarkable achievement, as most living donor transplants last, on average, about half that time.

The 50th anniversary marks an important moment in medical history in Ontario, as Mary Ann's transplant was among the first live donor transplants in the southwestern Ontario area. For Mary Ann's daughter, it is also very personal. Julie Ann's father had a heart attack and died at the age of 47. Having her mother here with her today – spending time with her children and extended family – is a precious gift.

"I think reaching this anniversary is very special. I have had the opportunity to share my life with my mom and see her with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren," Julie Ann says. Mary Ann describes her health these days as "really good for the most part," though she has faced a few health issues over the years. She enjoys spending time with her family and helping others as a volunteer in her community.

"I am busy but not horribly so," she says. "I have four great-grandchildren born in the last two years. The oldest loves to sing songs and they are so much fun to be around." Family has always been important to Mary Ann. She was one of seven children – five boys and two girls. When her kidneys failed in her mid-twenties, she was married, and a mother of two young children. After late-night dialysis sessions she would drive home and get a few hours of sleep, before going to work as a teacher the next day. It was stressful and exhausting.

At the time when she lost kidney function, live donor transplants were still fairly new in Ontario. The surgery came with more risks than today – for both the donor and the recipient. Even so, it was her best option. One of her brothers stepped forward first to be a donor, but he was not a match. Then her younger sister Margaret



Reardon got tested, with better results. "The doctor said, you two are a perfect match," Mary Ann remembers. "You couldn't be any closer if you were identical twins."

Margaret was only 21 years old at the time, with two small children of her own; still, she stepped up to be a donor and the surgery was a success. Mary Ann remains deeply grateful for her sister's kindness and generosity, and they share an enduring bond.

"There is a closeness between me and my sister, we are joined at the kidney not the hip," Mary Ann says. "I would do anything for her. My sister allowed me to have a life. I don't think I could have stayed on dialysis all that time."

Margaret recovered from the surgery and was healthy for decades after. She and her sister used to celebrate the transplant anniversary every year, with gifts of angels and sometimes cake. Unfortunately, Margaret has since developed early onset dementia and now lives in a long-term care home. But her choice to donate a kidney is one her daughter, Melanie Alward, admires and celebrates.

"Mom is a hero," she says. "Her decision to donate a kidney was for the love of her family, for her sister. She was always selfless and very giving."

As for Mary Ann, her advice to others living with kidney transplants is to "live life to the fullest," while being respectful of the donated kidney and following your doctor's advice. "You've been given a second chance, take advantage of it."

Living Donor Circle of Excellence

We're challenging businesses to join the Living Donor Circle of Excellence. Employers can demonstrate their support for living organ donation.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is proud to be a strategic partner of the Living Donor Circle of Excellence program. The initiative, developed by the American Society of Transplantation, recognizes companies that build wage replacement policies for living donors into their human resources policies.

Donors give the gift of life, but also may incur costs as a result of their donation. One of the barriers to living donation is the loss of wages for the donor during recovery after surgery.

In Ontario, in 2023, there were 1,102 kidney and liver donations performed; 308 were from living donors. The need for organ donors far outweighs the current supply. Living donation can help ease the demand on the list and is a profound way to help a loved one or stranger. Kidneys can be donated to someone you know, a family member or friend, or they can also be donated anonymously through the Paired Exchange Program.



In 2021, The Kidney Foundation of Canada not only became a partner of the Living Donor Circle of Excellence, but it also implemented a top-up Wage Replacement Policy for Living Organ and Tissue Donation. The Kidney Foundation's policy is an excellent example of how an employer can

easily support living organ donation and potentially save lives, reducing the burden of kidney disease on those living with the disease and on the healthcare system.

The University Health Network, Queen's University, Unity Health Network, Home Depot and Canadian Blood

Services are among some of the employers who have already joined the program.

"We encourage other Canadian organizations and companies to explore their own policies and to take a bold step to help those who decide to improve the health of someone through the selfless act of organ donation," said Anthony Tirone, Executive Director, of The Kidney Foundation's Ontario Branch.

It is empowering for employees to feel supported throughout the process by their employer. Because living donation is infrequent, support for a living donor may not be needed for several years. From an employer's point of view, it is a relatively low cost and easy program to implement.

Tanya Work benefited from the program when she donated a kidney to her mother. "There was a fair amount of time I had to take off work. I'm very fortunate to live in the big city where I didn't have to travel too far," Tanya said. "I'm very grateful that I worked at The Kidney Foundation at that time and that they had a policy in place to allow me to take the time off to not only go to the appointments that I've gone to, but also to make sure that I was not out any wages while I was off for the transplant."

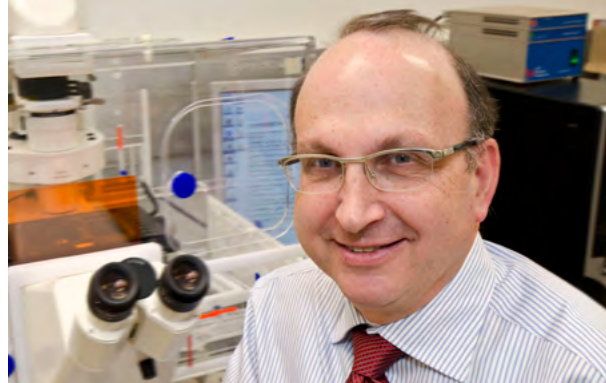
This type of policy is something Tanya hopes becomes more normalized one day. She encourages other companies to support their staff who want to become living organ donors. "There's going to be some people who might hesitate doing it because of finances. And if, as an employer, they can enrich other people's lives and help potential living donors do what I did and have the freedom to be able to save a life, and improve lives, then I definitely encourage other employers to do the same."

"We encourage people to find out if their employer has a leave policy," said Anthony. "If not, you could be the person to ask, 'why not?'" and invite them to learn more."

Contact the Kidney Foundation or learn more at kidney.ca/Living-Donor-Circle-of-Excellence

Dr. Rosenblum's Story

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is like home base. It's the only charity in the country dedicated to supporting kidney research, advocacy, and patient support. It's a very important organization to me as a kidney researcher.



Norm Rosenblum - Microscope 2012

In healthcare, collaboration is key. It takes close, coordinated partnerships between healthcare professionals, patients, governments, and advocacy groups to find effective solutions to complex diseases like kidney disease.

As the Scientific Director of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes (INMD), I've had an up-close look at the power of partnerships. The CIHR identifies and guides areas in need of investigation. In my role, I provide advice to help implement scientific granting programs. Our core work at CIHR depends on community partnerships. We work with organizations such as The Kidney Foundation of Canada to identify shared goals and create opportunities for investigators to pursue much-needed breakthroughs.

As a pediatric nephrologist, kidney disease research has been an important part of my career for more than 30 years. The focus of my research is identifying molecular mechanisms that impact kidney development in children. With malformations of the kidney being the major cause of pediatric kidney failure, better understanding why these malformations happen and how to stop them is crucial. The Kidney Foundation has been instrumental in my research career. The organization awarded me with a scholarship when I was just starting out. And I have been supported many more times by The Kidney Foundation and its donors. These grants have impressed upon me the importance of salary support for young researchers. A grant can be the catalyst for remarkable findings!

Just as grants propel research forward, awards that recognize researchers can provide the encouragement needed to push on and break new ground. In 2011, I received The Kidney Foundation's Medal for Research Excellence. It meant a great deal to me as a clinician

researcher. More importantly, awards like this are signposts that show the wider scientific community that this is an important area of work to pursue and contribute to.

I believe firmly in The Kidney Foundation's work. It supports fundamental research while also raising awareness about kidney disease and organ donation and offering practical support to those living with kidney disease.

It takes all sorts of people—doctors, nurses, social workers, funders, and so many others to make breakthroughs in research and treatment. To keep the good work going, we have to lift each other along the way. I'm very grateful to those who mentored me throughout my career.

In my career, I've seen huge changes. Care for children with chronic kidney disease has improved dramatically, genetic causes of many different forms of kidney disease have been discovered, and transplant outcomes have been positively impacted by advances in immunology. I can't emphasize enough what a huge hand The Kidney Foundation has had in these advancements. I know I speak for many when I say thank you to The Kidney Foundation and its incredible supporters who have kept the organization going strong for 60 years. I hope that in another 60 years, people's lives will have improved even more.

I hope to see better transplant outcomes, less need for dialysis, and better quality of life for people with kidney disease. To achieve these changes, it's more important than ever for The Kidney Foundation to exist as a consistent champion of kidney health.

Please consider making a gift today at [kidney.ca/give](https://www.kidney.ca/give). Every dollar matters. Every new discovery matters. And it's going to take a coordinated effort to keep making improvements for people impacted by kidney disease and their families.

Creating a Legacy of Hope

For over 60 years The Kidney Foundation of Canada has been committed to achieving excellent kidney health, optimal quality of life, and finding a cure for kidney disease. Creating a legacy gift is a meaningful way to ensure that we can continue to fund research, public awareness and advocacy. We invite you to join other supporters who have chosen this simple yet powerful way to make a lasting impact. Your commitment will change lives for generations to come.

There are multiple ways to make a legacy gift. The most common are:

- including The Kidney Foundation of Canada in your will (a bequest)
- making The Kidney Foundation of Canada the beneficiary of your RRSP, RRIF and/ or TFSA

- listing The Kidney Foundation of Canada as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy.

Every gift, no matter its size, ensures our sustainability and allows us to support Canadians with kidney disease and their families, far into the future.

Learn more at www.kidney.ca/planned-giving

We are here to answer any questions you may have and to provide you with support as you create your legacy of hope.

For further information contact:

Linda Pellas, National Director of Development
1.800.361.7494 x248
linda.pellas@kidney.ca

What are the benefits for you and your family?



Simple: Making a legacy gift of any size is as easy as giving instructions to your lawyer or notary, or making us a beneficiary of your RRSP, RRIF, TFSA or a life insurance policy.



Tax effective: Legacy gifts are a very great way to reduce estate taxes for your family and heirs.



Convenient: You can make a legacy gift at any time, for any amount. It can be in the form of cash, securities, real estate, or other assets.



Peace of mind: You can change your beneficiary at any time.



Cost effective: There are minimal out of pocket costs and your present income will not decrease when you make a legacy gift.



Commemorative: Your gift can serve as a lasting memorial for you, your family, or anyone you wish.

Mike Moore – Philanthropist, Hard Worker and Regular Person

by Erika Muscat

Mike is not your average dialysis patient. Like so many others, he attends his treatments three times a week and sits in a dialysis chair for several hours while his blood gets cleaned. So, what's unique about Mike? Mike has already put in a full day's work by the time his dialysis begins at 1:30pm - routinely arriving at the office at 3:30am! Even on non-dialysis days you will find Mike at his desk sending emails and closing deals for his construction company.



Mike was diagnosed as a type 2 diabetic about 8 years ago. Two years later, he learned his kidneys were failing and he would need dialysis to replace his kidney function. He recalls that it was a steep learning curve – adjusting to this new treatment. First on peritoneal dialysis, Mike now dialyzes at the local renal unit in Sault Ste. Marie, where he has found his second family and an important circle of support.

"I am one of the lucky ones," says Mike. *"I can still walk, talk, drive and work."* Dialysis has not slowed Mike down. At age 69, Mike wants to start enjoying time with his wife Fern, and travel more, but admits that dialysis makes that a challenge. He plans to travel to the US in his motorhome in the future. Arrangements need to be made for his treatments in advance and everything must be planned out meticulously. Still, that will not stop Mike in planning this trip, or in anything else that life may throw his way.

In 2023, Mike's nurses asked him to join their local renal unit Kidney Walk team, which he eagerly joined. Being in business for 36 years means that Mike has a wide network of business contacts and in his first-year fundraising for the walk he raised \$30,000. He joined the

walk again in 2024, surpassing his goal raising \$34,000! Tremendous accomplishments such as these seem to be just a regular day's work for Mike. Humble and kind, Mike does not let kidney disease hold him back. For people new to their diagnosis, Mike says *"it's not that bad, grin and bear it."* He also encourages people without kidney disease to register to be an organ donor.

In addition to his fundraising for The Kidney Foundation, Mike also volunteers for Wheels of Hope, driving cancer patients to their treatments over three hours away, and has recently donated an incubator to his local hospital. *"I like to help out. I've done very well over the years, now it's time to give back."*

Mike Moore at the Kidney Walk in Sault Ste. Marie



Kidney Walk Surpasses Goal and Raises Over \$1 Million



“The notion of ***Together we are stronger than kidney disease*** lives on in each and every one of you. Together, we raised over \$1 million to provide hope by funding innovative research and help by committing dollars to vital programs like Peer Support and Emergency Short Term Financial Assistance,” added Anthony.

Twenty-nine walks were held across the province, and additional teams walked virtually in a location of their choice. It was truly inspiring to see so many families, friends and partners in renal care show their commitment and support for their loved ones and support the work of the Foundation. 230 walkers reached Champion status, each raising over \$1000. The Kidney Walk would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of our kidney community.

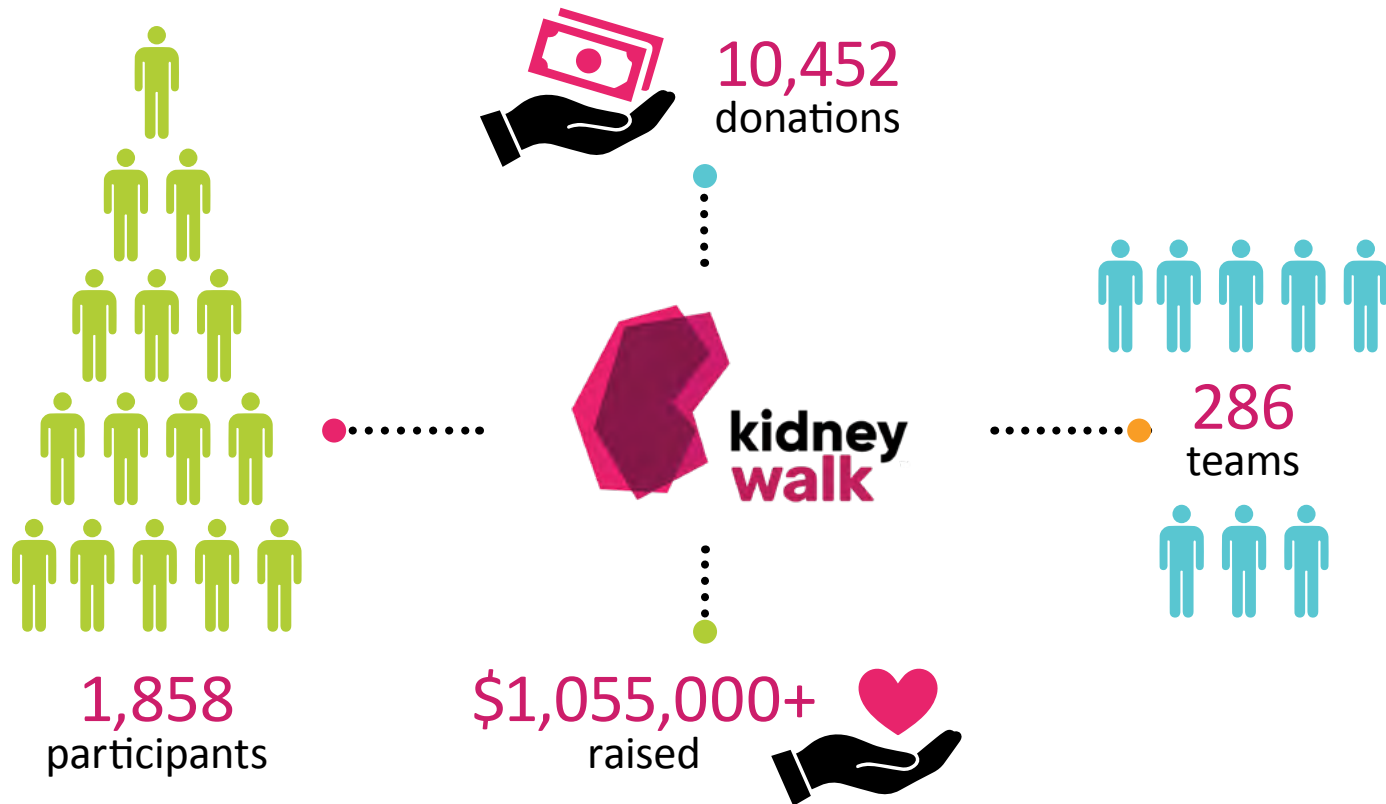
The kidney community stepped up across Ontario in 2024 for The Kidney Foundation’s Kidney Walk. Participants raised over \$1,050,000 crushing the \$850,000 goal in an outstanding show of support. New relationships were forged as we welcomed new families to our kidney community, and older friendships were renewed.

“I would like to thank all the donors, walkers, sponsors, volunteers and staff who participated in the 2024 Walks,” said Anthony Tirone, Ontario Branch Executive Director.



*We’re Stronger Together!
Join the Kidney Walk! Registration will open soon for our 2025 Kidney Walk at kidneywalk.ca. Join a community of support as we walk together to improve the lives of those we love.*







Donate Your Car To Help Canadians Fight Kidney Disease

The Kidney Foundation of Canada supports people affected by kidney disease through the delivery of programs, services and investments in vital kidney research. When you make your car a Kidney Car, you're driving change and providing hope.



Free Tow

Donating your car has never been easier.



Tax Receipt

Every vehicle donation is eligible for a \$700+ tax receipt!



Hassle-Free

From logistics to paperwork, we take care of it all.



The Trusted Choice

We've earned the trust of tens of thousands of Canadian donors who have chosen Kidney Car.



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