

Kidney Disease

Sometimes it helps to talk about it

(NC)—For many Canadians who have been recently diagnosed with a health condition, talking with someone who's had a similar experience can help. Sometimes, just knowing that others have been there before, or have had to overcome the same challenges, can be an important part of the coping process.

While counseling staff, which are part of the medical team, are widely available in hospitals and clinics to assist and support patients and their families, many people are also seeking the kind of reassurance that can often only come from connecting with someone who's been there, too.

"When I was first diagnosed, it felt like I was in a dream – nothing seemed real," said Nora Gilbert, 55. "Once the shock went away, I felt angry and depressed. I worried about the impact this was going to have on my life and my family, who were devastated by the news."

Nora did what many people would do in her situation; she began visiting various web sites to learn as much as possible about the disease, and talking to her doctor and other members of her healthcare team.

However, Nora still felt unsure about the future. How would she balance her work schedule with her appointments and

treatments? Should she tell her colleagues at the office? Would people treat her differently? How much should she involve her family in her care? Would they feel burdened?

Her social worker put her in touch with The Kidney Foundation of Canada's Kidney Connect Peer Support Program, and within a few days, Nora was talking to someone who had been through a similar experience.

"Lisanne and I have a lot in common – she was diagnosed about five years ago with the same type of kidney disease that I have," said Nora. "Just talking with her helped me feel better. She's come through a life changing event and given me hope that I can as well."

If you or someone you love has just been diagnosed with a health condition, talk to your healthcare team about the different kinds of support that are available. Many hospitals and community agencies offer volunteer-based peer support programs that could help. If you or a family member has kidney disease, or if you are thinking about donating one of your kidneys to someone in need, call 1-866-390-PEER (7337) and connect with someone who's been there, too.

- News Canada
Word Count: 395

Did you know...?

- An estimated 2 million Canadians have kidney disease, or are at risk.
- Each day, an average of 14 Canadians learns that their kidneys have failed.
- In 2004, there were 30,924 Canadians on dialysis or with a kidney transplant, and this number is expected to double over the next 10 years.
- Of the 4,025 Canadians on the waiting list for a transplant (as of December 2005), 2,578 were awaiting a kidney transplant.
- Since 1964, The Kidney Foundation of Canada has awarded more than \$77 million to support kidney-related research.

- News Canada
Word Count: 99

Kidney Foundation volunteers campaign to raise \$4.3 million

(NC)—Over 60,000 volunteer canvassers are going door-to-door in neighbourhoods across the country this March to raise money for Canadians and their families living with kidney disease.

March is Kidney Health Month and as global communities prepare for World Kidney Day (March 8th), The Kidney Foundation of Canada is kicking off its biggest annual fundraising event with high hopes and a goal of \$4.3 million.

Each day, an average of 14 Canadians learns that their kidneys have failed. Many more have chronic kidney disease and don't know it because symptoms are silent. In its bid to fight a disease that has no cure and that can lead to dialysis or the need for a transplant in its final stages, the Foundation is stepping up its efforts to ensure March Drive 2007 is a resounding success.

"We are living in competitive times and need to ensure that we can provide vital services to the growing number of people with kidney disease and those at risk," says Niloufer Bhesania, the national president of The Kidney Foundation. "Volunteers are the lifeline of our organization and thanks to their positive energy and team spirit, the Foundation continues to make an important contribution to improving the lives of thousands of Canadians."

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is the national volunteer organization committed to reducing the burden of kidney disease through funding and stimulating innovative research, providing education and support, promoting access to high quality healthcare, and increasing public awareness and commitment to advancing kidney health and organ donation.

More information is available online at www.kidney.ca.

- News Canada
Word Count: 259

Kidney disease can affect anyone.

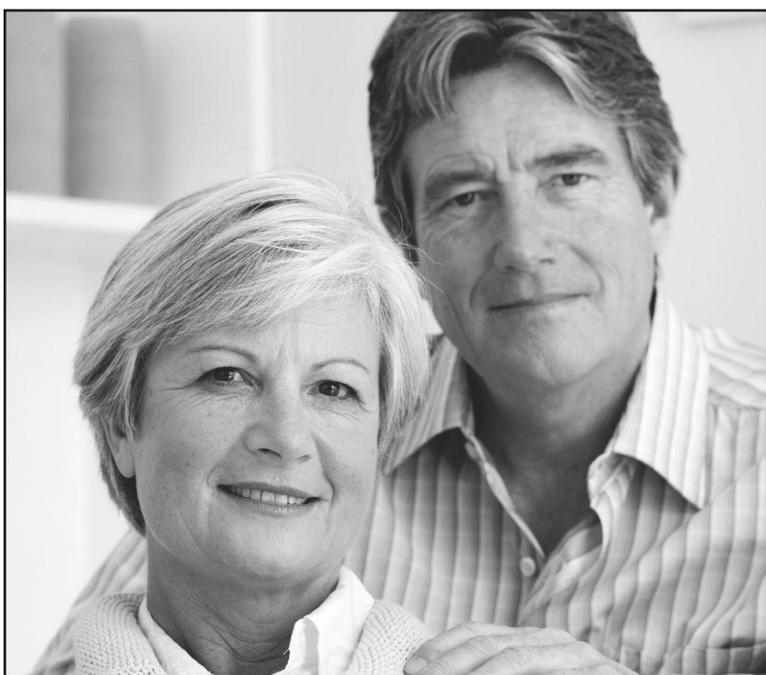
March is Kidney Health Month. Please give generously.

Because we're behind you all the way.

www.kidney.ca



The foundation of kidney care. NC



Living donation: New innovations offer hope for a shorter wait

(NC)—Sherron Chin often joked about giving her husband a kidney since the two of hers worked so well. Never once did the resident of Etobicoke, Ontario imagine that her words would turn to reality in later years when her husband was diagnosed with polycystic kidney disease.

"We knew that a transplant was an option, so when we learned his kidneys had started shutting down, we were prepared," said Sherron.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, Sherron stepped up to donate one of her kidneys.

"I can honestly say I didn't spend a lot of time thinking about the decision," she said.

"I had read enough to know that living with one kidney is not a problem if you're in good health."

Each day, an average of 14 Canadians learns that their kidneys have failed and, for many, kidney transplantation is their best choice of treatment. However, the widening gap between need and supply of deceased donor kidneys has

some people waiting as long as seven to ten years for a transplant. As a result, more people are considering living donation.

While donors who are biologically related to the recipient still account for the majority of live kidney donors, there has been growth in the number of donor kidneys from biologically unrelated donors like Sherron. In 2006, this trend, along with the recent development of innovative programs such as Paired Kidney Exchange and the Living Organ Donor Expense Reimbursement (LODER) Pilot Program in British Columbia, resulted in more live donors than deceased donors for the fifth year in a row.

Introduced in Ontario and British Columbia, the Paired Kidney Exchange Program offers kidney patients whose potential living donors have incompatible blood types the option of "swapping" donors with another couple in the same situation thereby enabling two transplant surgeries to occur. The LODER Pilot, a first in North America and jointly launched by The Kidney Foundation of Canada's British Columbia Branch and the British Columbia Transplant Society, assists living donors with out-of-pocket expenses related to their donation that are not covered by the healthcare system.

Designed to help more Canadians living with kidney disease receive the transplants they need in a shorter time, the two new programs are removing barriers which, in previous years, may have prevented people from donating a kidney to a friend or family member in need.

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- News Canada
Word Count: 443



Sherron Chin is one of many Canadians who has chosen to be a living donor.

Are you at risk for kidney disease?

New recommendations promise better health outcomes for those at risk

(NC)—If you have high blood pressure, diabetes, or if you have a family member whose kidneys have failed, you are at greater risk for kidney disease. Certain ethnic groups, including First Nations peoples, are also considered to be at higher risk. National recommendations by the Canadian Society of Nephrology have recently been developed that will help to keep your kidneys healthy.

If you belong to one of the above risk groups, The Kidney Foundation of Canada encourages you to:

- Discuss your blood pressure target with your doctor who will recommend therapies and dietary and lifestyle changes to help you achieve your goal.
- Keep blood sugar as close to normal as possible – you will

minimize your chances of developing diabetic kidney disease.

- Ask your doctor about a lab test known as *estimated glomerular filtration rate* (eGFR). This test is widely seen as the most effective way to detect kidney disease in its earliest stages – when it is more treatable.
- Be sure to get tested regularly. This will help you and your doctor to monitor your kidney function, which may change over time.
- Continue to manage your blood sugar and high blood pressure carefully, even if your kidneys are healthy or if your loss of kidney function is non-progressive. More information is available online at www.kidney.ca.

- News Canada
Word Count: 222

Make sure you get your wish.

Tell your family you want to be an organ donor.



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The foundation of kidney care.