The Kidney Society News

Issue No: 246 Nov/Dec/Jan 2025-26

Supporting you with tools to live your best life through expert, community-based kidney care.

THE KIDNEY SOCIETY: WHO, WHAT, WHERE.

CLIENT SERVICES TEAM

Jack: Community Health Educator

Jack is our Community Health Educator and his role here is all about making kidney health easier to understand, translating medical language into something our people can connect with.

Riana: Social Worker

Riana is our Social Worker, here to support clients with advocacy, assessments, and access to resources - helping you navigate the ups and downs.

Vanessa: Wellness Educator

Vanessa walks alongside the kidney community, supporting clients on their wellness journey through movement, lifestyle guidance, and meaningful kōrero (talk). Whether it’s a stretch, a stroll, or a good yarn, she’s here to uplift your hauora (wellbeing) in ways that feel right for you.

Gina: Client Services Manager

Gina keeps both the office and community dialysis homes running smoothly. Staying in close communication with the team is key, and she finds the work both dynamic and deeply fulfilling.

COMMUNITY DIALYSIS HOUSE TEAM

Jenny: Community Dialysis Assistant

She supports the day-to-day running of three community dialysis homes, making sure clients feel safe, supported, and comfortable - truly “a home away from home.”

Nathaniel: Maintenance Technician

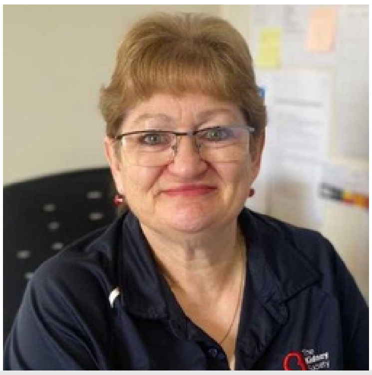
Nathaniel maintains our three dialysis houses and the office, ensuring clean, welcoming spaces for everyone.

THE KIDNEY SOCIETY:
WHO, WHAT, WHERE.

ADMIN AND OPERATIONS TEAM

Joanne: Development Manager
Joanne leads our fundraising initiatives and partnerships, helping us grow our reach and impact across Aotearoa. She manages our donor care, our Legacy Programme (leaving a gift in your will), and fundraising initiatives.

Kath: Chief Executive Officer
Kath Eastwood leads the Kidney Society team in supporting clients through education, home support, community dialysis homes, wellness programmes, and more.



Maria: Office Assistant
Maria supports the team by helping clients by preparing new client packs, coordinating resources for community events, assisting with the quarterly newsletter, and more.

Whether you're living with kidney disease, supporting a loved one, or just want to learn more – the Kidney Society is your community of care! Get in touch when you need.

Call us
Phone: 09 278 1321
Freephone: 0800 235 711

Email us
contact@kidneysociety.org.nz

Head to our website
www.kidneysociety.org.nz

Connect us on socials
@kidneysocietyadks

Visit us
5 Swaffield Road, Papatoetoe,
Auckland

PO Box 97026, Manukau City,
Auckland 2241

Office hours
Monday to Friday
9am – 5pm

Please note that the Kidney Society office will be closed from 5pm Tuesday December 23th to 9am Monday 5th January.

If you need to reach us during this time, please call 0800 235 711 and leave a voice message, and we'll get back to you as soon as possible. For any urgent medical needs, please contact your GP or go to the nearest Emergency Department (ED).

Kia ora from Kath

As we near the end of another year, it feels timely to reflect on what we've achieved together and to look ahead to 2026 with renewed focus and purpose.

Over the past 12 months, we've welcomed several new staff members to our Kidney Society whānau. Our small and dedicated team has had more than 6,300 direct client interactions this year — visiting people in their homes or calling to check in and offer support. We are incredibly proud to provide this wrap-around community service that helps people with kidney disease live their best lives. We know the holiday period can be extra tough for people living with kidney disease so please remember, you can reach out to us at anytime if you require support.

This year, we also welcomed nine new clients into one of our community dialysis houses. We've always believed that home is best for those who can dialyse independently, and our houses continue to provide that vital "home away from home." The flexibility, extended-hour dialysis, and opportunities for social connection and peer support remain key strengths of this service.

We are all too aware of the inequities that exist in health and the postcode lottery many people with kidney disease and their families face when it comes to access to care, support, and education. That was one of the reasons we launched our virtual education series. The monthly sessions are designed to give people living with CKD and their whānau clear, practical, and empowering information to help them better understand their condition and make confident, informed choices about their care and treatment.

Our next session is coming up at the end of November — more information can be found on page 23.

This year we also met with key Members of Parliament to begin an important conversation about the future of kidney care in Aotearoa. These discussions were the first step in building stronger awareness, collaboration, and support for people living with kidney disease across New Zealand.

We know there is still much more work to do — both in raising awareness of kidney disease and in refining our services to best meet your needs and support you. As we look ahead to 2026, our goal remains the same: to expand our capacity, reach people in more meaningful ways, and ensure we're set up for long-term impact.

As 2025 draws to a close, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all our clients, members, volunteers, and staff. Your time, energy, and expertise are the heart of the Kidney Society. Many of you go above and beyond — and we see and appreciate all that you do.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported us this year — especially the Kohimarama Bowling Club, Stonefields Choir, Kurt Kelsall and his incredible effort in the Auckland Marathon, and Brendon Murray Construction for their generosity in raising both funds for the Society and awareness of kidney disease. Your contributions make a real difference to the lives of our clients and their whānau.

On behalf of the Kidney Society, I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas, and a wonderful New Year spent with whānau and friends. I look forward to connecting with you again in 2026.

Ngā manaakitanga,

Kath

Kidney Society Events

27

Thursday 27th
November 2025

A Kidney Friendly Christmas Virtual Education Session

Online
Time: 7pm
Register here >
or scan the QR code below

See more information about this session on page 23.

24

Tuesday
24th February
2026

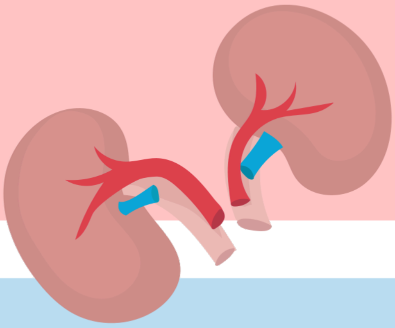
Counties Pre Dialysis Session

Selwyn Anglican Church
Cnr Massey Avenue & Hain Avenue
Mangere East
Evening session

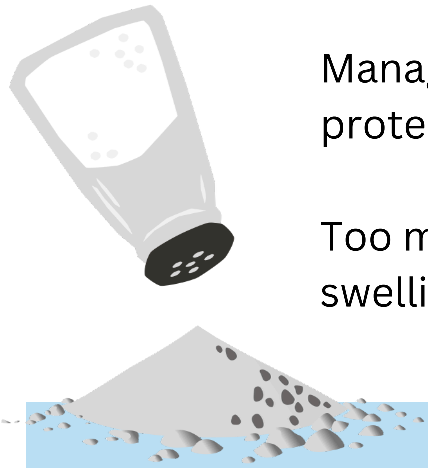
For more information about the event or if you'd like to attend, please contact Rachel Spence on 021 819 535, email rachel.spence@middlemore.co.nz

FLAVOUR WITHOUT THE SALT: SEASONING SMART IN CKD

Te Tai Tokerau Renal Dietitians



Sodium is a mineral found in salt.



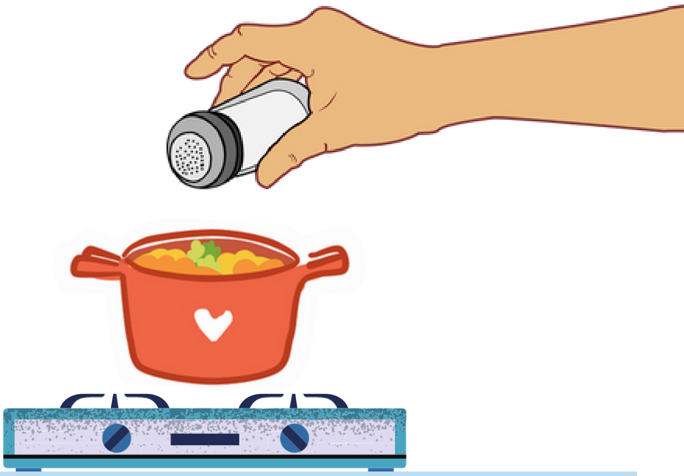
Managing sodium intake in cooking is a key step in protecting kidney function and supporting overall health

Too much sodium can raise blood pressure, increase swelling, and put extra pressure on the heart and kidneys

Home Cooked Kai

Cooking at home gives you control over how much salt goes into your kai

Experimenting with different herbs, spices, and ways of cooking can increase the flavour of your meals



Different Ways To Cook

Roasting or grilling vegetables is a great way to bring out their natural sweetness, while marinating proteins in spice mixes gives each meal its own tasty flavour

Herbs, Spices, and Seasonings

Fresh or dried herbs like basil, parsley, rosemary, thyme, and coriander can transform the flavour of a dish.

Spices like cumin, paprika, cinnamon, chinese five spice, and mustard add depth and warmth.

Garlic, ginger, and onion bring sweetness and warmth, while citrus juice and chilli adds a zing of brightness.

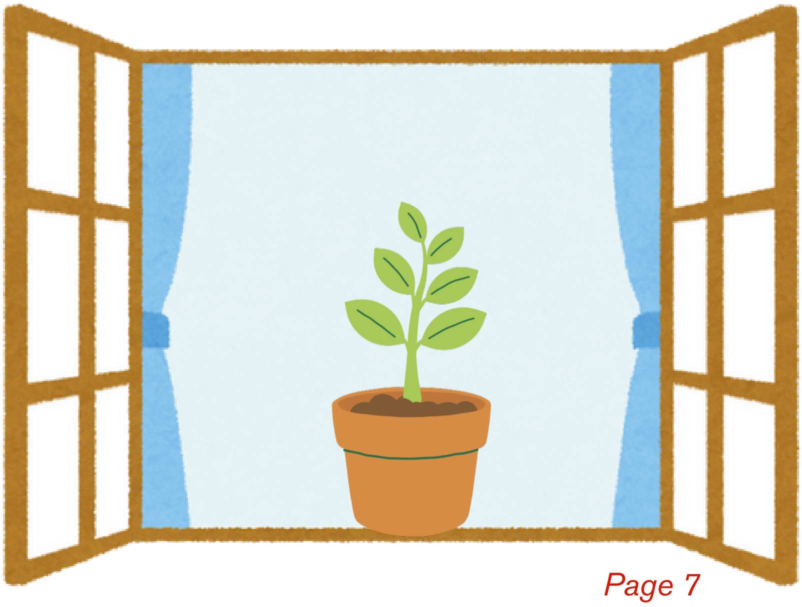
Vinegars, pepper, and salt-free seasoning blends are also great flavour boosters.

Low Sodium Salts

Be cautious of “low sodium” alternatives such as lite-salt or low-salt as these can be high in potassium and often are not appropriate for people with CKD.

Grow Your Own

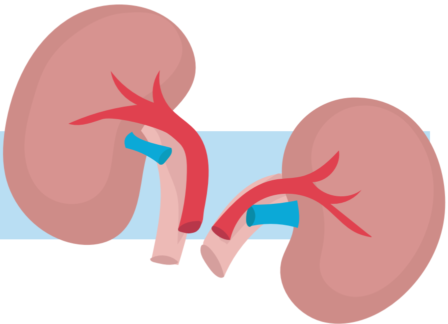
Herbs don’t have to break the bank, swap and share with friends, whanau or neighbours, snip from public gardens or walkways or grow your own from seeds or cuttings on a sunny windowsill



Seasoning For Your Kidneys

Reducing salt isn't about bland food, it's about finding creative ways to enjoy meals that support long-term kidney health.

Swapping salt for herbs and spices not only keeps blood pressure and fluid retention in check but also makes kai more enjoyable.



Small changes like these make a **huge difference** for your kidneys and your taste buds!

Chicken and Chickpea Curry

Serves 6
Time to make 1 hour

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 onion, peeled and diced
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 750g chicken, diced
- 2 tbsp curry powder
- 1 can chopped tomatoes
- 2 cups water
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup plain unsweetened yoghurt
- 3 cups mixed vegetables (fresh or frozen)
- ½ cup chopped coriander (optional)
- Brown Rice (to serve)

Methods

1. Heat oil in a large pot over low heat
2. Add onion and cook until soft
3. Add garlic, chicken, and curry powder to the pot. Cook for 5 minutes
4. Add canned tomatoes, water and chickpeas
5. Cook gently for about 30 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and no longer pink in the middle. Cook rice while you wait
6. Add yoghurt and vegetables and return to a gentle simmer. Continue cooking for a further 5 minutes until the vegetables are hot
7. Remove from the heat and serve with brown rice

Mint, Asparagus and Courgette Salad

Serves 4
Time to make 15 minutes
Ingredients

- 1 bunch asparagus, trimmed and cut into thirds
- 1 courgette grated or sliced thinly into ribbons
- 2 radishes, sliced thinly
- 2 tbsp shredded mint
- 1 can lentils, drained and rinsed
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 lemon: 2 tbsp lemon juice + 1 tbsp lemon zest

Method

1.Bring a pot of water to the boil 2.Place asparagus in boiling water and blanch for about 1 minute 3.Drain and run under cold water to cool quickly 4.Place all in a large bowl and mix to combine 5.Serve immediately. Can keep in fridge for up to 2 days

Carolyn's story

Sixteen years on haemodialysis, and Carolyn hasn't missed a single session. Not one. It's how she makes sure she looks after herself - for herself and the people she loves.

Carolyn has a close-knit family: her husband, daughter, son, and her two grandchildren, who she spends the weekends with. Her daughter says, "You're my best friend." Creating these memories means the world to Carolyn.

Her kidney journey started early. At 28, on a cruise with her boyfriend - now her husband, Kevin - she got a bladder infection. Tests showed one kidney was functioning "as a 90-year-old kidney would." She moved on with life, assuming dialysis might come much later - maybe at 75. She worked hard in real estate.

But at 51, things changed suddenly. She was struggling to catch her breath while showing houses in her real estate job. A blood test showed her creatinine was over 1000. The renal team told her she had around a month to live without dialysis.

They had no idea she was still working a full-time job. "It was death or dialysis," says Carolyn. **"So I chose dialysis."** A central line went in the next day and she hasn't looked back.

"Dialysis is at the top of my list," she says.

"The way I see it is if you're too sick to go, you should be in the hospital and you'll get dialysis there." She remembers how frightening those first weeks were, and how her friends organised themselves into a support roster.

"So much of it is mindset," she says. "If you put your mind to it, I believe you can do anything."

Carolyn dialyses three times a week at a community dialysis house. Dialysis away from home is her preference, so she can separate health from life. "I didn't want my health taking over the house. When I leave dialysis, I leave it behind," she says. She finishes around 1pm, heads home for a rest, and then gets on with her day. On Fridays she tells the machine, "See you Monday," and the weekend is hers - cooking, catching up with friends, and spending time with the grandkids.

She sets up her own machine each session - wiping, disinfecting, making sure everything is right. “It gives me a bit of control.”

She appreciates the staff, and they appreciate her.

Three times a year she brings breakfast spreads: cheese boards, fruit, yoghurt. “They look after me, so I like to show my thanks.”

They’ve been there through some tough patches - a blood clot that led to open-heart surgery, a couple of infections, and a rough time in 2024 when she had sepsis while Kevin was in hospital with a heart attack. “The renal team helped me get my head straight and just keep going.”

With the experience she has, Carolyn shares what she’s learned with others at the community dialysis house, especially the younger ones. If she notices someone taking too much fluid off, she’ll quietly offer a few tips she’s picked up over the years. To people with a transplant, she says, “Treat it like gold. Take your meds every day.” And to everyone else: “Get a yearly warrant of fitness — a proper check-up.” Almost like a community mum, caring for those around her and she has even been called ‘Aunty’ by a few of the young patients.

“Every morning, I thank the Lord. Thank you for today.”

Carolyn loves cooking, hosting dinner, and keeping her place nice - the beautiful home Kevin built for them. She does the cleaning in stages as her body requires.

The Kidney Society has been part of her journey too - offering practical advice, checking in, and helping her find new ways to stay active.

She remembers Tracey and Vanessa coming for morning tea with exercise gear and plenty of encouragement.

“Tracey has been wonderful over the years - really helpful,” she says. “She even got down on the floor with me when I told her I had sciatica. She brought me things like exercise balls to use at home. She’s straight to the point and gives off such a positive vibe. I always felt good around her.” Carolyn is grateful for Tracey’s support, and she’s looking forward to working with Vanessa now too.

Now 67, Carolyn understands her health inside out - the symptoms, what’s normal, when to ask for help. She’s independent, but supported by family, her dialysis whānau, free taxis to treatment, and a health system she’s genuinely grateful for.

“If I ever win Lotto,” she says, “a big slice is going back to the health system and organisations like the Kidney Society.”

She doesn’t pretend dialysis is easy but she refuses to let it take over her life. “I don’t dwell on it. When I walk out, that’s it for the day.”

Sixteen years of dialysis. Not a single missed session. Still turning up. Still living her life.

Carolyn’s story shows what resilience looks like: a practical mindset, the day-to-day reality of kidney disease, and the strength that comes from good support around you.

Thank You, Brian Murphy

Celebrating 15 Years of Dedicated Service

After 15 years of outstanding commitment and service, the Kidney Society bids a fond farewell to Brian Murphy, who retired from his role as Community Health Educator at the end of October.

Brian joined the Kidney Society in 2010, bringing with him both deep compassion and decades of experience in health care. Before joining the Society, he worked as a nurse at Middlemore Hospital for nearly 20 years throughout the 1980s and 1990s, spending much of that time in the renal service. After a successful career in nursing, Brian explored a completely different world - the marine industry - for over a decade before returning to his passion for supporting people living with kidney disease and their whānau.

In his role as Community Health Educator, Brian has supported hundreds of kidney patients across the upper half of the North Island. His work has involved everything from home visits, liaising with dialysis units, medical teams, and running community education sessions.

Through his down-to-earth approach, Brian has helped thousands of New Zealanders decipher the information they've been given about their kidneys, walking beside each one, giving direction on what to expect and what their expectations should be.

His warmth, humour, and genuine care for people have made him a trusted and much-loved face of the Kidney Society. His ability to educate, encourage, and walk alongside others has left a legacy in the communities he has served.

As Brian steps into retirement, we thank him for his 15 years of exceptional service, kindness, and dedication. His contribution to kidney health education and patient support has been truly invaluable.

Thank you, Brian — for your compassion, your wisdom, and the difference you've made in so many lives. We wish you all the very best for your well-earned retirement

MOVE, SMILE, AND THRIVE: EXERCISE AS THERAPY OVER THE HOLIDAYS

Written by Vanessa Kipa

Kidney Society Wellness Educator

The festive season is a time of joy, family gatherings, and—let's be honest—plenty of delicious food. But for people living with kidney disease, it can also be a period when routines slip, energy dips, and exercise gets pushed to the back burner. The good news is that staying active, even in small ways, can be incredibly helpful—for your body, your mind, and even your sense of connection with others.

Exercise isn't just about keeping fit. For people with kidney disease, moving regularly helps maintain muscle strength and flexibility, supporting mobility and independence. It also helps your heart and circulation, keeping blood pressure in check. And the benefits don't stop there. Exercise is a natural mood booster. It releases endorphins, eases tension, and can help you feel calmer and happier, even during the sometimes stressful holiday season. Being active can also reduce feelings of loneliness, especially if you exercise with family, friends, or in community activities. Even short bursts of movement can help digestion, regulate blood sugar, and give you an energy boost when fatigue sets in.

The best part is that staying active over the holidays doesn't mean joining a gym or spending hours exercising. A short walk after meals is perfect for digestion and energy, and it can be fun too—stroll around your neighbourhood to see Christmas lights, or visit a local park with a friend or family member. Gentle stretching while watching TV or listening to music keeps muscles flexible and eases stiffness. Simple strengthening exercises, like sit-to-stands, using a foot roller, or light resistance bands, can be done in short bursts to keep your muscles strong.

Dancing to holiday music or joining in family games is another way to move while having fun and spending quality time with loved ones.

Of course, safety comes first. Listen to your body—slow down or rest if you feel tired, dizzy, or short of breath. Plan activity around dialysis or treatments so you exercise when you feel your best. Starting small, even for just a few minutes at a time, can help you stay consistent without overdoing it. And if you're ever unsure about which exercises are safe, our Wellness Program is here to guide you.

Exercise can even become a festive tradition. Walking together after Christmas dinner, doing group stretches, or having a dance-off in the living room can lift your mood, reduce stress, and help you feel more connected. The mental health benefits are just as important as the physical ones, leaving you feeling calmer, happier, and more engaged during a season that can sometimes feel overwhelming.

Keeping your body moving through gentle walks, stretches, or light resistance exercises strengthens muscles, boosts mood, supports kidney health, and eases feelings of loneliness. Include family or friends when you can, stay safe, and most importantly, enjoy it. This Christmas, celebrate your health by moving, enjoying, and looking after your body—it's truly the ultimate act of self-care.

For more advice on safe and suitable exercises, please call Vanessa on 0800 235 711.

Celebrating 21 Years of Community Dialysis Houses: *A Home Away from Home*

This year marks a remarkable milestone for The Kidney Society — 21 years since the opening of New Zealand's very first Community Dialysis House. What began as a bold and compassionate idea has grown into a model of care that has transformed hundreds of lives across South Auckland.

On 30 October 2025, staff, clients, and supporters gathered at the Calvert and Wallace Houses in Māngere East to celebrate this special anniversary and reflect on more than two decades of progress, partnership, and people.

A Vision Rooted in Compassion
The Kidney Society has always believed that home is best for those who are able to dialyse independently. When people can stay close to their families, communities, and routines, their overall wellbeing improves — and that's something we've been committed to from the very beginning.

The vision began in 2004, when Dave Lilly and Nora van der Schrek helped establish the first Community Dialysis House in Papatoetoe — Ripley House. It was the first renal facility in the country to operate without medical staff present, paving the way for an entirely new approach to dialysis in Aotearoa. Dave and Nora had big hearts and a shared vision — one that always placed the patient firmly at the centre. Their partnership was built on mutual trust, compassion, and a common purpose — values that continue to guide us today.

Empowering Independence
Over the past 21 years, the Community Dialysis Houses have empowered more than 235 people to dialyse independently — people who might otherwise have had to rely on hospital-based care at Middlemore.

Across three South Auckland locations — Ripley House in Papatoetoe, Calvert House, and Wallace House in Māngere East — there are now 28 chairs available, serving up to 55 clients. These homes are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, offering flexibility and freedom that traditional hospital settings can't provide.

Our clients describe the houses as "a home away from home." They can come and go as they please, dialyse when it suits their schedule, and remain connected to their families, work, and community.

Teamwork and Collaboration
The success of the community house model is built on collaboration and shared purpose. It wouldn't be possible without the fabulous Counties home training team, who work closely with us to prepare and support clients to dialyse independently.

We also acknowledge our own dedicated Kidney Society staff, who manage the day-to-day operations and provide guidance, encouragement, and care to our clients. Together, we are building stronger, healthier communities — one dialysis session at a time.

A Proven, Sustainable Model
Beyond improving quality of life, the community dialysis model is also a proven cost-effective approach to care. By supporting independent dialysis, the three houses have collectively saved New Zealand's healthcare system an estimated $130 million over the past 21+ years, while delivering better long-term outcomes for patients.

Looking Ahead
With Type 2 diabetes rates increasing, the need for more dialysis services is growing — and The Kidney Society is already planning for the future.

The Kidney Society are actively working with Health New Zealand on a proposal to establish another community dialysis facility in the Counties Manukau region. As strong advocates for community dialysis we believe this empowering, patient-led approach could benefit many other regions across New Zealand.

Celebrating People, Community, and Hope
The 21st anniversary celebration wasn't just about the buildings — it was about the people whose lives have been changed by them. Clients shared their stories of dignity, independence, and connection – powerful reminders of why these homes matter so deeply.

The houses remove barriers. They bring care closer to home and give people the freedom to manage their own treatment in a supportive, community setting.

As the Kidney Society looks ahead to the next chapter, its founding values remain as strong as ever: compassion, empowerment, and collaboration — helping New Zealanders with kidney disease live well longer.

7 Types of REST over the festive season

Written by Riana Shaw,,
Kidney Society Social Worker

With the holiday period fast approaching, I was inspired by a podcast from Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith, who is an American internal medicine physician and author. How often have you heard someone say: "I need a break"? as the end of the year approaches.

We have also all been in a situation where you did not "do" much for a day or two, but you still feel tired. This may be because we all require different forms of rest.

Here is a brief introduction to seven different forms of rest and some ideas on how to achieve optimal rest over the festive season.

Let's make sure you recharge and get your new year off to the very best possible start.

Firstly, Physical Rest. Most of us will be quite familiar with this form of rest. It involves giving your body the time and space it needs to recuperate. It encompasses both intentional periods of relaxation, and active restorative practices like eating a healthy meal, going for a walk and off course, sleep. Like other body functions, your kidneys' function is regulated by your sleep-wake cycle, so poor sleep may impact their ability to do their job.

Most of us need seven to eight hours' sleep a night. We all have the occasional bad night where we struggle to fall asleep or wake often, but if you regularly struggle to get enough rest, check your sleeping habits and environment.

1. Your room should be cool, dark and quiet.
2. Avoid caffeine and alcohol. Take time to unwind before you go to bed. Exercising during the day may also be helpful.

Next, **Emotional rest.** This is the permission to be the *real* you. This is a time where you can stop hiding your feelings or be a chronic kidney disease client but instead, just be YOU. You don't have to pretend to be anything.

Research in emotional well-being has shown that when we chronically suppress our feelings, we increase our stress load. This is why excess stress doesn't always come just from "doing" too much. Burnout can also come from "*feeling"* too much without space to process your feelings. When we give ourselves permission to share our real thoughts and feelings, we lighten our emotional burden and renew our capacity.

TOP TIPS:

1. Have authentic and honest conversations with people you trust and love.

2. Pause and create a space to reflect. Allow yourself to process information. Think about the healthy habits you might want to continue in 2026.

We may also need **Mental Rest**, which involves giving your mind a break from constant stimulation and rumination on things you cannot change. It's about finding moments of peace amidst the chronic overthinking and endless processing of information. Adequate mental rest will inspire creativity and clarity. Some ways to achieve mental rest is to:

1. Practice mindfulness and/or meditation.
2. Set boundaries on technology use. Instead, engage in activities that bring you relaxation or joy.

Spiritual Rest is about connecting with something greater than yourself, whether through faith, nature, or meaningful practices.
Spiritual rest provides a sense of purpose, hope, and inner peace. It's the anchor that helps navigate life's storms.

1. Engage in prayer or other faith-inspired activities.
2. Sit outside in the sun and appreciate the sounds and smells around you.

Social Rest could involve nurturing your healthy relationships or connecting with others. The holiday period can often be overwhelming with family gatherings and social events. It's about quality, not quantity! Take moments of social rest when possible.

Additionally, the holiday period could also often be a time where people feel isolated and alone. Connect with your peers and people who understand what you are going through. It is important to know that you are not alone.

Remember, adequate social rest contributes to improved self-confidence and a sense of belonging.

TOP TIPS:

1. **Prioritise quality time with individuals who are affirming and supportive.**
2. **Set boundaries on social engagements when you feel stretched.**
3. **Connect with supportive people if you feel isolated this festive season. Perhaps volunteer at your local church.**

Remember, if you need emotional support this festive season, call or text “1737” anytime. This four digit freephone and text number is funded by the Ministry of Health and make it easier for people to connect with mental health professionals.

Sensory Rest involves intentionally limiting exposure to stimuli, giving your senses a break from constant input and rushing to appointments or dialysis.

A study in the "Journal of Environmental Psychology" found that exposure to natural settings positively impacted individuals' cognitive function and mood.

You could limit your sensory exposure by:

1. Using an eye mask or earplugs when possible and appropriate.
2. Limit exposure to screens and loud noises in the evening before bedtime. Also take short input restriction sessions during the day, a quiet 5min is all you need to recharge.

And finally, **Creative Rest** involves engaging in activities that tap into your imagination. It's about embracing the freedom to enjoy creativity without the pressure to produce anything.

Research in the "Journal of Positive Psychology" suggests a positive correlation between engaging in creative activities and increased life satisfaction. This type of rest could improve overall wellbeing.

1. Allow yourself time for playful activities like adult colouring in, painting or boardgames.
2. Embrace a mindset of curiosity. Read a book or attempt to write a song.

Some of the activities could even be combined, for example, connecting with your family by playing a board game could give you social and creative rest.

Overall, I hope these insights into the seven types of rest enrich your journey towards recuperation and ultimately your journey to oranga or well-being this festive season.

"If you get tired, learn to rest, not to quit.”
~ Banksy (Street Artist)

A big thank you to the wonderful team at BMC

We're incredibly grateful to Brendan Murray Construction (BMC), who selected Kidney Society as their charity for their recent Golf Day, **raising an outstanding $20,000.**

BMC chose to support us this year because one of their team members has a personal connection to one of our clients and has seen first-hand how our wrap-around support helps people living with kidney disease.

This generous gift will help support more people with health education, social work, wellness support, and access to our community dialysis houses across the regions we serve.

To everyone at BMC and everyone who swung a club on the day. **Thank you for standing with our clients and their whānau.**

The precious gift of time... Anna Maharaj shares her kidney transplant journey....

Anna's transplant journey

Reflecting on Thank You Day, November 21st, 2025.

Thank You Day 2025: a day to commemorate and give thanks to all the incredible donors, donor whanau, and medical staff who make organ and tissue donation possible.

Please join us all in showing our gratitude for these amazing humans who make the selfless decision to be organ donors and then buckle in beside us to support and continue caring for the lifeline that is organ donation.

The saying "living life to the fullest" took on a whole new meaning at the age of twelve when my renal failure journey began... 23.5 Years of donated life thanks to the selfless decision my donor made to donate their organs.

"I live every single day with an attitude of gratitude".

After being diagnosed with SLE (also known as lupus), the battle to save my own kidneys and my life meant endless rounds of chemotherapy, heavy immunosuppression, IV steroids, hospital admissions and the care of many dedicated medical professionals.

After being so unwell for most of my teenage years I was lucky enough to have a few years in remission. At this time, I was able to attend the University of Waikato to pursue my dream of becoming a teacher.

I was in ward 24 at Waikato hospital for almost two years leading up to my transplant, being too sick to leave hospital with endless infections, operations, renal failure, no energy, short of breath and requiring blood transfusions. I want to acknowledge the staff at the Waikato Home Dialysis Unit, as their training and support allowed me a six-month period being on dialysis at home, especially Nicky and Mark and the many other nurses who encouraged me to get home with a machine and gain some independence.

During this time, I had incredible friends who would visit and bring me chocolate brownies. My appetite was poor back then and I needed a feeding tube. However, I could tolerate brownies!

I was one of the first patients to be put on the transplant waiting list from Waikato hospital in 2001. Dr Ian Dittmer, Dr Helen Pilmore, Dr Maggie Fisher, Dr Kim Wong and Dr Peter Sizeland championed my cause and did everything to keep me alive on dialysis so I would be a successful transplant candidate. I am forever grateful to them, because in 2002 I received my kidney from a deceased donor at Auckland Hospital.

My family and I celebrate my transplant anniversary every year, it is bittersweet.
I think about my daughter, my husband, my donor and the borrowed time I have been so generously given from my donor. This gift of life has given me time to see my daughter grow into an adult, to travel, to create a beautiful home and to fulfill my continued passion for Primary school teaching.

I am under the wonderful care of Middlemore Hospital Renal Transplant Team and have been with them for the past 22 years. I know how lucky I am to have them all. I also have a very supportive family GP who collaborates with the transplant team and is very accessible, which I am grateful for.

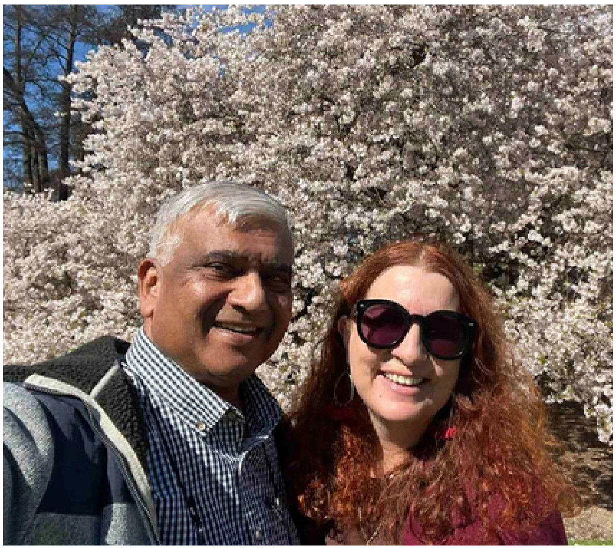
As a transplant recipient, I am focused on making my life count and honoring my donor and those who have changed my life and the lives of so many individuals fortunate enough to receive transplants. Life is truly precious.

My second chance has meant I have married the most incredible, handsome, loving man who is by my side through all the ups and downs of my health journey. The other very important person is our daughter.

Without my donated kidney I wouldn't have been around to experience the absolute delight of loving a child and being such a proud Mum. I am so blessed.

I have also fulfilled my passion for teaching, working with incredible students and staff. To say this is rewarding is an understatement, teaching children has given me purpose and the sincerity of the profession never ceases to amaze me. I am continuously inspired to reflect on my own practice as a teacher, without my transplant this wouldn't have been possible.

My family and I attend the annual Service of Thanksgiving every year in recognition of those who have given the gift of life to others.



It's a very emotional service, my daughter and I light a candle every year to acknowledge and remember the gift, but also the loss my donor family reflects on the day their loved one passed away.

Living would not have been possible without the selfless act of organ donation. Through organ donation we celebrate new life and new beginnings. It's a joyful thing to live, however without the gift of life, the many health professionals, transplant coordinators and others involved at such a fragile time, for those living with a transplant or awaiting a transplant, the path back to health would be much more difficult, if not impossible.

Thank you for taking the time to read my transplant story.

I recently celebrated 23.5 years since my transplant; this was a profound moment for me, a time to reflect on my journey, through all the highs and lows. I can honestly say I will never waste a single moment of my life.

2025 has been very busy navigating a post covid world, at the same time very fulfilling. I recently was asked to be the National Organ Donation representative on the Organ and Tissue Clinical Governance Committee, a voice from a transplant perspective. It is an honour and immense privilege to participate and represent transplant recipients, advocating for organ donation, raising awareness of how donation saves lives and sharing my kidney transplant journey.

Coming up, we have our final Organ and Tissue Donation Governance committee meeting for 2025. It is an absolute honor and privilege to be the national transplant recipient voice in a collective space of inspirational humans who all advocate for organ donation equitable outcomes for those on life saving organ recipient waiting lists.

Thank You day 2025 is coming up fast also, this year November 21st. Every year we encourage everyone to have a conversation about organ donation. Please check out the Organ Donation New Zealand website for up-to-date information.

Organ Donation New Zealand

Thank You Day, thank you to all our donors and their whānau for the most incredible gift of life at the most difficult of times.

On November 21st, as a kidney transplant recipient, I honor all organ and tissue donors for their precious gift.

My family and I would like to say a heartfelt thank you. We also want to express our gratitude for all those involved in the process of organ donation.

Nobody knows what the future will bring, however without organ donation; I wouldn't be here to share my story. Thank you to all donors and their whānau for the gift of life, the most incredible gift at extremely difficult times.

In Aotearoa, New Zealand we have amazing organisations that work to support end stage kidney disease such the Auckland District Kidney Society, Kidney Health NZ and many community-focused groups that do the mahi to enable people to live their best lives possible.

Thank You Day 2025, we acknowledge and give thanks to their mahi. These groups and individuals work closely with people at the most vulnerable times of their lives and for me personally, these experiences are held close in and my memory forever.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge Organ Donation New Zealand, their continued support of myself and all transplant recipients and donor families is something we are all truly grateful for.

Updated photos, my husband Noel and I was taken on May 19th, 2025, Service of Thanksgiving at Holy Trinity Parnell, Auckland. In recognition of those who have given the gift of life to others.

A beautiful few days in the South Island where we walked around the gorgeous Hagley Park Christchurch in September 2025.

Tuakana teina, "we are stronger together"

Life is precious x

~ Anna Maharaj

Do you belong to a community group?

We'd love to partner with you to help spread awareness in our communities about kidney disease and our work!

We want more people to know about the Kidney Society, the work we do, kidney health, and ways to support us. One way we are doing this is by public speaking engagements to community groups. We are thankful that we are receiving invitations from Lions, Rotary, and U3A Clubs so that we can increase public knowledge about kidney health, and how those living with kidney disease can receive support.

If you belong to a community group that you think would benefit from hearing a presentation from the Kidney Society, please contact Joanne Hand at joanne@kidneysociety.org.nz or by mobile 027 262 1313. We would love to hear from you!

A Kidney Friendly Christmas Virtual Education Session –

Free to Attend!

VIRTUAL SESSION!

Your Guide to a Kidney-Friendly Christmas

Join our renal dietitians for a festive and informative session designed to help you enjoy the holiday season safely and deliciously while living with chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Whether you're newly diagnosed or have been managing CKD for years, this session will give you confidence to plan, eat, and celebrate with your loved ones this Christmas.

We'll share practical tips and ideas for every part of your Christmas menu, including:

- Breakfasts & Brunches – Start your day the kidney-friendly way
- Starters & Snacks – Smart swaps for nibbles and platters
- Main Meals – Traditional favourites made lower in salt, potassium, and phosphate
- Puddings & Treats – Enjoy sweets without overdoing it
- Party & Buffet Foods – How to join in without worry
- Alcohol & Drinks – What's safe, and what to limit
- Things to Watch Out For – Hidden ingredients, portion sizes, and label tips

Thursday 27th November

7:00PM

Online
Join from your home, marae, or wherever suits you!

REGISTER NOW

We recently hosted our first two virtual educations sessions.

The first one was busting common myths about nutrition and diets while living with chronic kidney disease. We were thrilled to have Renal Dietitian Teri Styles join us to share her expertise - tackling some of the most common misconceptions about nutrition and offering practical tips to help you make the most of your meals.

On the right are just a couple of the myths we busted.

If you want to access the full virtual session, you can click this link to access the recording

MYTH
I CAN'T EAT SOME FOODS IF I HAVE CKD

TRUTH
All of your favourite foods can be enjoyed, although the amounts of these and how often you have them may need to be reduced.

MYTH
EVERYONE WITH CKD NEEDS TO EAT THE SAME DIET

TRUTH
Having a variety of food and being able to enjoy your food is important. Kidney disease is a life-long condition so it's important your eating pattern is sustainable.

Sleep Hygiene & CKD: Getting A Better Night's Rest

Our second session was Sleep Hygiene & CKD: Getting A Better Night's Rest

The free session consisted of proven strategies to help you sleep better. Designed specifically for those living with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD).

In this session, we covered things like why CKD affects your sleep, how poor sleep impacts your overall health, practical tools and habits to improve your sleep quality and tips for managing nighttime symptoms.

If you want to access the full virtual session, you can click this link to access the recording

Take Photos of your Experience if you have Kidney Failure or had a Kidney Transplant

We're inviting YOU to participate in a unique research project!

If you are on DIALYSIS OR had a KIDNEY TRANSPLANT, and can use a camera (smartphone or we provide a disposable polaroid) your story matters. Help us understand your kidney failure and transplant experience through taking photographs.

What We're Looking For: PHOTOS

- That capture your dialysis/ transplant journey ---- before, during, or after
- Moments of strength, struggle, recovery, and resilience.
- Everyday life on dialysis or post-transplant: the big and small wins.
- $50 for taking photos, $50 for phone interview. Data usage covered

How to Join
Email: Debbie.Wilson@aut.ac.nz or scan QR code below for more info.

“I CHOOSE TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF LIFE, AND NOW I’M ASKING YOU TO HELP OTHERS DO THE SAME.”

- Chantelle Good, Kidney Society Board Chair and previous Kidney Society client

When I was 15, I was told I carried a faulty gene that runs in my family. It’s called Familial Focal Segmental Glomerulosclerosis (FFSGS). In simple terms: it can cause kidney disease. No one knew if or when it would catch up with me. It did.

At 24, my kidneys stopped coping and life changed overnight. I went from being a young mum juggling work and school runs to organising my days around dialysis - first peritoneal, then home haemodialysis. Four nights a week, four hours a night.

I won’t pretend it was easy. But I also won’t call dialysis the enemy.

Dialysis kept me here. It gave me time with my son. It let me keep working. It gave me the chance to wait for a transplant.

In 2019, just before midnight, I got the call: a deceased donor kidney was available, and I needed to be at the hospital within three hours. I was grateful but the journey that followed wasn’t easy. For weeks, the kidney struggled to wake up, and since then I’ve faced a few rejection scares. But six years on, I’m here - living a full, active, and grateful life. I go to boot camps, hike, ride motorbikes, run a business, and try as many new things as I can. Every day.

I choose to make the most of this life and this opportunity, not just for me, but to honour my donor.

I first heard about the Kidney Society through a magazine I was given when I started peritoneal dialysis. Not long after, the Kidney Society reached out, and that’s when I met the Community Health Educator, Brian. **Brian would visit me every six months or so, and gave me information about home dialysis training, shared valuable resources and and just to sit, chat, and see how I was really doing.** Even between visits, I’d get their magazines in the mail. I’d read the stories, the updates, and that’s how I began to really understand who the Kidney Society was and what they did.

A couple of years ago, the CEO called and asked if I’d consider joining the Board. I was too busy at the time, but said I’d love to the following year. Now, I’m the Board Chair - and it feels right. It aligns with my passion and my long-term goal of making a real impact in healthcare and one day building a hospital.

Today, I’m proud to chair a focused, values-driven Board. **We’ve got a clear vision: supporting more people, and in more places.**

I truly believe in our mission. **We’re the only organisation dedicated to supporting people with kidney disease with things like how to navigate finances, emotional wellbeing, and exercise that’s safe for their individual needs.** Without the Kidney Society, there would be a gap that hospitals can’t fill as funding and resources only go so far.

We pride ourselves in providing the support we do and when someone has a question or a problem, we don’t say, “We don’t know.” We say, “Let us find out.” We connect them with the right people, the right answers, and the right support networks.

Across Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Tairāwhiti, Hawke's Bay and the Lakes, more than 3,000 people a year turn to the Kidney Society.

Your donation helps to fund:

- Wrap-around support: health education, social work, and wellness education for clients and their whānau.
- Community dialysis houses: warm, homely spaces where people can dialyse closer to where they live and love.
- Practical advocacy: help with forms, entitlements, transport, and the everyday barriers that make a hard season harder.
- Culturally responsive care: clear information and support so people understand their options and can choose what's right for them.

Those dialysis houses are close to my heart. They've enabled 235+ people to dialyse independently, stay in work, and keep life moving. They've also saved taxpayers an estimated $130 million over 20+ years because home-style dialysis costs much less .

1 in 10 people have a kidney condition and we want to support every single one of them. We're only just getting started. With more support, we can:

- **Increase our capacity,** so we can reach and care for more clients in need.
- **Expand the regions we serve,** to ensure we can support as many people across Aotearoa as possible.
- **Build more community houses** in rural areas, so people on dialysis don't have to travel long distances for care and support.

The support we provide is practical, proven, and personal. I've lived the difference it makes.

Christmas can be a beautiful time but also a tough one if you're living with kidney disease. While others are at the beach or round a barbecue, many of our clients are planning life around treatment, managing fatigue, and trying to keep spirits up for their kids.

If you're able, will you give a Christmas gift to Kidney Society today?

Your donation - large or small - will help someone feel seen, supported, and less alone this holiday season.

Because of a stranger's generosity, I got time back. Your generosity can give someone else their life back.

HOW TO DONATE

DONATE ON OUR WEBSITE

You can donate any amount on our website at: **kidneysociety.org.nz**

DONATE VIA INTERNET BANKING

Our banking details are:

Account name: **Auckland District Kidney Society**

Account number: **12-3032-0705009-00**

DONATE VIA PHONE

Please call us on **0800 235 711** if you'd like us to process a credit or debit card payment for you.

On behalf of the Kidney Society team, thank you for your support and care. You are truly making a difference for people living with kidney disease. Thank you for standing with me in my call to help give them the best life possible.

With gratitude,

Chantelle Good

Board Chair, Kidney Society (and proud Kidney Society client)

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ – Why can't my dietitian write me a food plan?

There are a lot of factors that influence nutrition in CKD, including but not limited to:

- The stage of your kidney disease and whether you have any other health condition(s), e.g. diabetes, high blood pressure.
- The medications you are taking as some of these can influence your nutrition
- Your family's food preferences and things like the cost of food, access to supermarkets in your local area and the cooking facilities you have available.
- Your food preferences and whether you have any other nutrition-related goals.
- Religious or cultural food practices or beliefs and traditions related to your food intake.

Because CKD is a progressive condition, and your lab results can fluctuate, your nutrition may need to be adjusted. A fixed "meal plan" could quickly become outdated and potentially unsafe.

Your dietitian is there to educate and empower you to make flexible, informed choices rather than provide you with a rigid list of foods you can and can't eat. They can teach you how to build nutritious, kidney-friendly meals, decipher foods labels and which nutrients are important for your kidneys, just to name a few. Most importantly, they are there to guide you on your food and nutrition journey that provides you with confidence, much more control and long-term success than following a static plan wherever you are, whether that be at home eating out or travelling.

Jennifer's story

A heartfelt thank you to Jennifer for sharing her story. Her strength and resilience are evident throughout, and her reflections offer a valuable perspective on life with dialysis. It is a thoughtful and beautifully written account that helps others better understand the journey.

I have been doing this for 5 years [dialysis], my attitude has definitely changed in that time.

It's made me strong enough to stand up and say these are my feelings not anyone else's.

To be honest, it's not that scary for me,
it's not a horror film, no blood and guts.

It's just normal people trying to live a normal life on a machine.

It's a daily routine for us here; at the end of the day we get to go home.

We have to cut our own lunch like children going to school.

I have had people on some sites tell me that they don't want to hear about dialysis, and can I leave or not talk about it.

I won't be silenced by people that are scared of what their future might hold for them.

They might be sitting next to me one day.

I have people come off the machine because they didn't want to be there.

I live with that fact daily.

The nurses can't force us to stay on the machine, but they can give us a choice. It's up to us to say yes or no.

I want to live, not just for me but for my family and friends.

I want to be a living novelist doing my magazine.

I am a writer, author, and novelist , that lives every day with dialysis.

I want people to understand that dialysis for me isn't that bad.

If you didn't catch the recent article by our CEO, Kath Eastwood, in Women's Health, here's a brief summary.

One of the key issues she discussed was the link between kidney disease and women's health, particularly during pregnancy.

Complications such as preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, and high blood pressure can increase the risk of kidney damage. Research shows that up to 1 in 5 women who experience preeclampsia may go on to develop chronic kidney disease (CKD) later in life.

Have you experienced kidney issues related to pregnancy?
If you're comfortable sharing your story, we would be grateful to hear it. Your experience may help others feel less alone and contribute to greater understanding and support for women facing similar challenges.

SHARE YOUR STORY

If you have a story to share about your experience with kidney disease, we'd love to hear from you. Whether your journey involves diagnosis, treatment, transplant, donation, pregnancy-related kidney issues or caring for someone living with kidney disease - we'd love to hear about your journey.

Sharing your story can help raise awareness, offer hope to others and create a stronger, more connected community.

If you'd like to share, please fill out **this form**. You can also scan the QR to the left to access to form.

Shape the conversation

Magazine information: Be a part of the Kidney Society magazine

Do you have an idea for the magazine or a story to share? This is your magazine, and we're here to include the content that matters to you. Send us your stories and ideas, we'd love to hear from you!

Our magazine deadlines for 2026 are:

Feb Magazine
23 January, 2026

Send your thoughts to *contact@kidneysociety.org.nz*

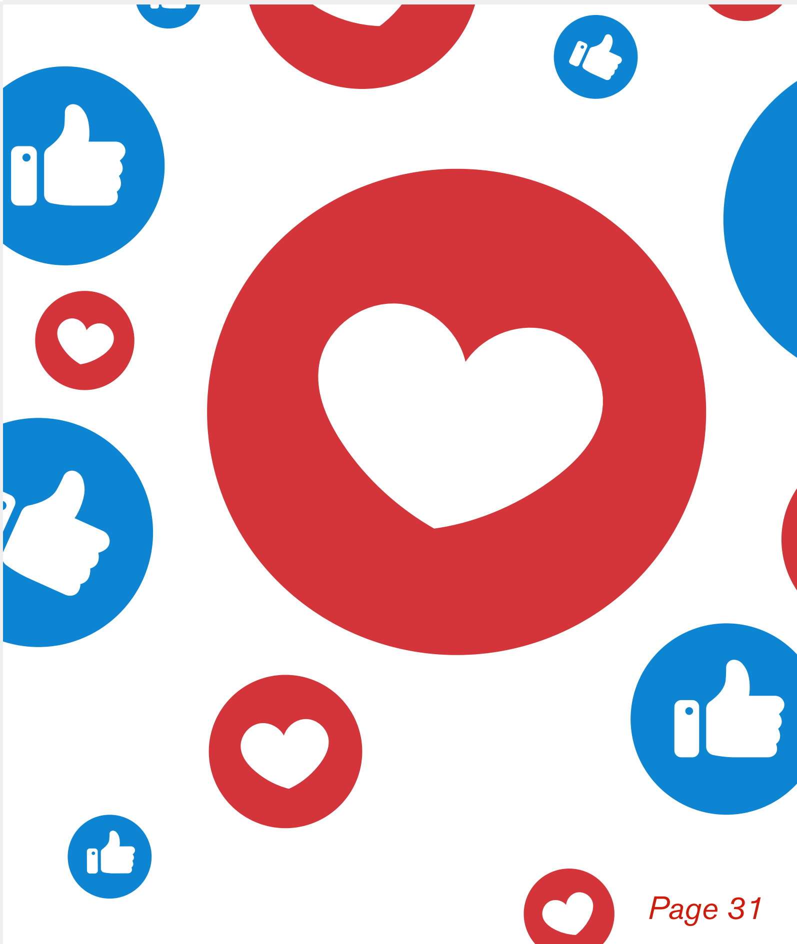
Have you joined our Facebook community yet?

If you haven't, do follow our Facebook page, Kidney Society - ADKS.

It's a place where we share stories, what we've been up to, as well as our upcoming plans and events, information, statistics, and resources.

It's a place for us to be able to create a two-way conversation about how we can continue making a positive impact on you and others living with kidney disease together.

Follow us here!
www.facebook.com/kidneysocietyadks



The Kidney Society is a well-respected charity that relies on public donations, bequests, sponsorships, and other forms of financial support from the community in order to be able to meet the needs of those with a serious kidney condition. The Society's services are provided free of charge because we firmly believe that everyone with a kidney condition should have access to good quality support and information.

We offer our sincere thanks to the following Trusts and Foundations who have recently provided grants to help fund our client services.

Maurice Paykel Community Trust - $5,000
Trust Tairawhiti - $10,000
Foundation North - $20,000
The Trusts Community Foundation - $6,000
Dragon Community Trust - $7,000
Four Winds Foundation - $15,000
Eastern & Central Community Trust - $10,000
Bay Trust - $10,000

We acknowledge, and are grateful for, the generous support received from all of the organisations listed above. We're incredibly grateful to NZ Couriers for their ongoing donated services, and to Marley New Zealand for generously supplying materials.

In Memoriam Donations have been received in memory of:

Bryan Bennett
Usha Singh
Phillip King
Robert Cochran
Indrakumar Kulasingam
Anan Achakulwisut
Kuar Surinder Singh

We offer our thoughts to family and friends and thank them for their support.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the many people who have donated to the Kidney Society over the last three months. Every donation, no matter how small, makes a real difference. Thank you!

The Kidney Society welcomes public donations, and these are tax deductible. Donations can be made via the Society's website or directly into our secure bank account.

Details below:
Website address is: www.kidneysociety.org.nz
Bank account name: Auckland District Kidney Society
Bank account number: 12-3032-0705009-00

Please include your details so we can send you a receipt for tax purposes. If you would like to talk to us about a donation, sponsorship, or fundraising event, please contact Kath Eastwood on 0800 235 711 or email: kath@kidneysociety.org.nz

A $20 donation supports a client to receive this magazine for a whole year.

A $240 donation funds a series of home visits to clients.

A $96 donation funds the purchase of 20 Wellness packs for clients.