

**NKF**

CONNECTING WITH CARING PEOPLE

# CONNECT

APR 2017

“I now have greater strength and confidence to move about.”

*Story on page 2*



# I have a **better grasp** on life

Constant intake of painkillers, bladder infection, manual labour since his early adult life and biological ageing eventually took a toll on 70-year-old former bodybuilder, Mr Tng Ban Choon. He developed spinal problems and ended up with kidney failure two years ago, needing dialysis to stay alive.

**B**an Choon has been suffering from spine degeneration in the neck and lower back – two areas most prone to deterioration – known as cervical and lumbar spondylosis respectively. His condition was accompanied by nerve compression, which caused chronic pain, muscle weakness, numbness and tingling in the hands and feet, poor reflexes, travelling pain as well as soreness and stiffness. He had also undergone surgeries for three metal implants in his spine over the years. The doctor told him that if he had not gone for the first implant, he could have been paralysed from the neck down. Ban Choon's hands, legs and neck movements were thus severely restricted and he had to endure great pain and suffering over the years because of his conditions. This has greatly affected his daily life and activities including moving around in and outside his home. More so as he has to travel to the dialysis centre in Simei 13 times a month.

## Improving with OT

When he first joined NKF, Ban Choon had extreme difficulty standing up. With physical and occupational therapy proven to be effective treatments to relieve or help minimise nagging neck or back pain, he was indeed thankful to find out that NKF had just started an occupational therapy (OT) programme for kidney patients. He immediately joined the programme in March last year.

Once a week on Tuesdays, he undergoes OT sessions at NKF's headquarters for about an hour. The exercises helped to loosen his joints and strengthened his muscles, especially his right hand which is very weak. The neck exercises also helped improve his body movements. Over the months, Ban Choon steadily made progress in his rehabilitation. Now, the pain that he has been enduring for such a long time is much more bearable.

“I find the therapy wonderful. I always look forward to coming for OT sessions, which is customised and totally risk-free.”

Mr Tng Ban Choon

## More independent

NKF's occupational therapist, Mr Joel Tham had also arranged for handrails to be installed in his home under the HDB's Enhancement for Active Seniors (EASE) scheme to help him move easily and safely from one place to another. At home, Ban Choon – who lives with his wife, son and his eight-year-old grandson – has become more independent, thanks to the guidance and advice given by the OT team. Now, he does not need the help of his family so much. Only once in a while, his grandson spoils him by carrying a cup of tea for him.



## Encouraging patients

Ban Choon always encourages other kidney patients at his dialysis centre to join the OT programme to improve their physical state due to ageing, especially those with multiple co-morbidities. “If not they will take life as meaningless,” he said. “Their life can be prolonged through such activities and they will be happier.”

## About the Occupational Therapy Programme

The programme is tailored to the individual patient's needs to optimise both activity and participation by supporting and improving independent living, autonomy and quality of life.

## Benefits

- Improves safety and enables independence of care at home
- Prevents falls and provides effective care and management in the event of falls to avert unnecessary hospitalisation and functional decline
- Strengthens and maintains muscular strength, balance, coordination and general activity tolerance and endurance
- Empowers patients to re-integrate into the community and re-engage in social activities and occupations that they enjoyed prior to disability/deterioration through various strategies to overcome environmental and social barriers
- Reduces the burden of stress on caregivers through education and training on how to manage and excel in their role
- Helps to assess patients' equipment needs and apply to existing funding bodies for assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, walking aids and electric scooters

For assistance on our OT programme, please contact  1800-KIDNEYS (5436397)

 [contact\\_us@nkfs.org](mailto:contact_us@nkfs.org)

She Calls Me

“BIG SIS”

“When I was doing dialysis and was trembling with cold, she would give me a massage and offer words of encouragement. I was eventually moved.”

Ms Catherine Lau, speaking about nurse Angie



Ms Angie Chua, 52, has more than 25 years of experience in the healthcare industry. As a Senior Nurse Manager at NKF, she shares good relations with her patients and her dedication has touched the lives of many under her care – one of them being 42-year-old Ms Catherine Lau.

Catherine was diagnosed with Lupus at the age of 17 and started dialysis four years ago at NKF due to Lupus-induced kidney failure. That was when she met Angie.

**A challenge**

Upon starting dialysis, Angie recalled, Catherine was generally difficult to get along and refused to listen to reason. Angie remarked, “At one time, she deemed her dialysis chair to be too dirty and insisted to have the chair cleaned before she would even sit on it for dialysis. Her attitude and behaviour brought various challenges for the team.”

The pivotal moment came when Catherine was hospitalised one day and Angie, who was off-shift, decided to pay Catherine a visit but not before giving her a call to ask what she would like to eat. “I have been frequently hospitalised since my diagnosis of Lupus, but that was the first time a nurse would go to such lengths for me,” Catherine said.

**Winning her over**

Appreciative of Angie’s display of care and concern, Catherine started her silent observation of the nurse manager. Over time, she discovered that Angie’s kindness towards patients is genuine. Catherine, who is 10 years younger than Angie, affectionately calls her “big sis”. Looking at the scene, one would be hard pressed to imagine the Catherine now as a “difficult patient” once.

As Catherine is afraid of the pain, she does not want the needle to be inserted into different locations on her arm each time she does her dialysis. Aware of her dilemma, Angie specially planned for another injection method for her, in which the needle is injected at precisely the same location each time, which will reduce the amount of pain caused.

\*Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease in which the body’s immune system becomes hyperactive and attacks normal, healthy tissue. This results in symptoms such as inflammation, swelling, and damage to joints, skin, kidneys, blood, the heart and lungs.

Making Patients' Lives Better

Singapore Health Quality Service Award

BEST TEAM  
ILTC CLINICAL PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT  
NURSING INFECTION CONTROL TASKFORCE  
NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION



NKF’s nursing team with Mr Chee Hong Tat, Minister of State for Health (centre) and Prof Ivy Ng, Group CEO, Singapore Health Services (3<sup>rd</sup> from left). NKF also bagged 8 awards for quality service.

**A team of NKF nurses won one of the highest accolades for their efforts in cutting infection rates at 5 dialysis centres from 7.14 per 100 patient-months to 1.23 in just one year – lower than the overall average of around 2.31.**

# “Peritoneal Dialysis Gives Me More Freedom,”

I had urinary difficulties when I was seven years old and often had fever. I later learned that it was due to urinary tract infections which gradually damaged my kidney functions. Hospitalisation became a common occurrence. I also had to undergo spinal surgery due to my condition. It was only more than 10 years later that I had to start dialysis in 2015. Perhaps it was because as I grew older, I've become more health conscious. I watched my diet and exercised regularly, which helped slow down the progression of kidney failure.

### Being positive

Another reason as to why my health did not deteriorate could be my positive mindset. I tend to look on the brighter side of things, because I have witnessed many other more unfortunate people whose conditions are much more serious than my own, such as those who lost their mobility or even the ability to look after themselves, whereas I can still live like an ordinary person.

### Doing dialysis at home every night

The dialysis that I undergo is called peritoneal dialysis (PD). I can do it on my own at home every night, with each session only lasting about 7½ hours. PD offers a lot of convenience and flexibility. You only need to be careful to maintain a hygienic environment in order to prevent infections.

Due to my illness, I had difficulty finding a job after graduating from ITE. As I have loved singing since young, I decided to perform on GeTai to earn some income. I also found a part-time sales job. My next step is taking on a scholarship offer to study for a diploma to further my career. I am also very grateful to receive financial support from NKF. They also awarded me with the Smile & Encouragement Award. A kidney transplant is of course also on my wish list.”



“PD offers a lot of convenience and flexibility. You only need to be careful to maintain a hygienic environment in order to prevent infections.”

Ms Wong Rui Jun, 29

Did you know,  
Peritoneal Dialysis is...



A form of dialysis which can be carried out conveniently at home



Painless as no needling is required



Gentler, hence fewer food restrictions and side effects



For assistance on our PD programme,  
please contact 1800-KIDNEYS (5436397)

pd.support@nkfs.org



# Kidney Disease and BESITY

World **Kidney Day** is a global campaign aimed at raising awareness of the importance of our kidneys and to reduce the frequency and impact of kidney disease.

This year's theme "Kidney Disease & Obesity" will discover more on obesity and its relation to chronic kidney disease and how to prevent it!



Source: National Health Survey 2010

### Obesity Kills

Obesity leads to **diabetes** and **high blood pressure** among other chronic diseases



BOTH of which are the 2 leading causes of **kidney failure**

### How Do I Know If I'm Overweight Or Obese?

$$\frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height (m)} \times \text{Height (m)}} = \text{BMI}$$

Body Mass Index

Healthy 18.5 – 23  
Moderate risk 25 – 29.9  
High risk ≥ 30

Source: Health Promotion Board

Obesity occurs when energy intake (calorie consumption) is higher than the energy you burn off:



## 2E's to Obesity Prevention

### E XERCISE anytime anywhere

- Alight 1 bus stop ahead and walk the remainder to your destination
- Do simple stretches after sitting for long periods
- When going up 1 floor, opt to take the stairs instead of the lift
- If you're heading out for lunch, walk and take a longer route
- Do leg exercises and lift weights while watching TV
- Brisk walk, jog or swim 3 times a week, 15 minutes each time!



### E AT healthily

When cooking:

- Grill, bake or steam instead of deep frying
- Use natural herbs and spices instead of stock cubes and seasoning powder
- Use healthier cooking oils like canola, sunflower or peanut

When eating out:

- For chicken rice, leave the skin and fat of the poultry behind
- For nasi lemak, limit your deep fried options to 1 and opt for more vegetables instead
- For noodles, order the soup version instead which has less sodium



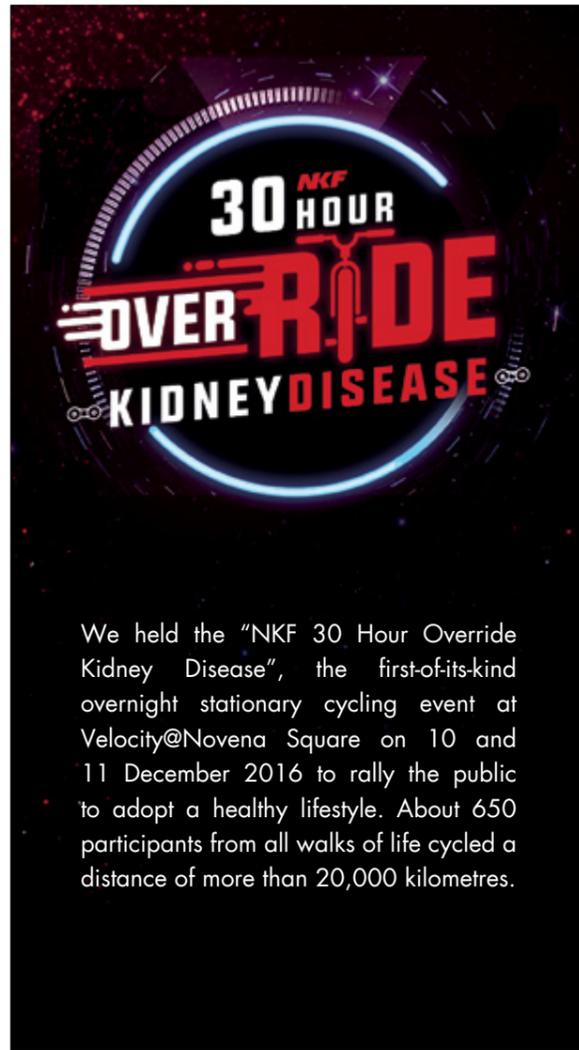


We launched our new donor membership card "Friends of NKF" at a charity carnival on 19 November 2016 at IMM Garden Plaza, held to garner more support for needy patients. The card offers exclusive discounts and privileges to valued donors like you in appreciation of your support to our cause.

Look out for your card which will be mailed to you!

**Keen to join us as a reward partner?**

Contact **Shawna** at [shawna.lam@nkfs.org](mailto:shawna.lam@nkfs.org)



We held the "NKF 30 Hour Override Kidney Disease", the first-of-its-kind overnight stationary cycling event at Velocity@Novena Square on 10 and 11 December 2016 to rally the public to adopt a healthy lifestyle. About 650 participants from all walks of life cycled a distance of more than 20,000 kilometres.



Through the kindness of Director Jack Neo and his friend Mr David Low, CEO of Futuristic Store Fixtures Pte Ltd, we once again had the opportunity to invite our longstanding supporters to the newly released light-hearted movie "Take 2" on 9 February 2017 at FilmGarde, Bugis.



**Support** needy kidney patients,  
**Give them** a chance to live!

**\$2** per ticket

**\$20** per booklet

**Stand to win Cash Vouchers!**  
(Non-tax deductible)

**NKF DONATION DRAW 2017**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Prize \$10,000 worth of Cash Vouchers
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize \$5,000 worth of Cash Vouchers
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize \$2,000 worth of Cash Vouchers
- 50 Consolation Prizes \$100 worth of Cash Vouchers (per set)

Draw Date : 28 April 2017 (Friday)  
Time : 3pm  
Venue : NKF Centre, 81 Kim Keat Road Singapore 328836

**DONATE NOW!**  
[www.nkfs.org/event/nkf-donation-draw-2017](http://www.nkfs.org/event/nkf-donation-draw-2017)

Winners will be notified through phone calls and they must bring along their NRIC to claim the prizes. Results will be published in **TODAY** and [www.nkfs.org](http://www.nkfs.org) on **8 May 2017**. Terms and conditions apply.

# Community Falls Prevention Programme



**“ It’s our privilege to be able to contribute to, and bless NKF and the patients.”**

Ms Chan Choo Keng,  
Boscombe Life Church Community Services

The prevalence of falls increases with age. One fall incident tends to result in repeated falls over time incurred by the same individual due to reasons such as weakened reflexes and muscles after the first fall. This can be a challenge for NKF who admits needy patients with multiple co-morbidities and have a 50% age profile of 65 and above. This results in issues ranging from a compromised quality of life to missed dialysis sessions.

Hence NKF, together with the National Council of Social Service and SG Rehab, have piloted a Community Falls Prevention Programme to build a volunteer-led home-intervention programme to identify fall risks in patients’ environment and reduce fall incidents by encouraging patients to play an active role in their fall prevention.

## An Organisation with a



Boscombe Life Church (BLC) is a familiar name with many of our NKF patients and caregivers. An active community partner in the East Zone of Singapore, BLC has been an ardent contributor to our patients since 2010. Regardless of race, language and religion, they have been contributing their time and resources to help build better lives for our patients in many ways, including our Community Falls Prevention Programme to help patients reduce their risk of falling at home.

**In the past one year,**  
**>500**  
fall episodes of patients were recorded

**60%** of these falls occurred in the patients’ homes



Getting the whole community involved! A role-play conducted during a training session organised for NKF’s long-time community partner, Boscombe Life Church.



Gearing up volunteers through a series of training sessions in preparation for the execution of their role.



Patient Advocates in the dialysis centre warming up to their role as falls prevention advocates to patients.



BLC church members volunteered themselves to support NKF’s pilot run of the Community Falls Prevention Programme and took time out of their busy schedule to attend the training session on a Saturday afternoon.



Mr Liu Sy Yee receiving a token of appreciation on behalf of BLC at one of our patient festive gatherings, which they sponsored. The party was organised for patients and families to bond with one another and have a fun-time with games and activities as part our holistic patient care programme.

**Wish to know more about the programme and be part of the community effort?**

Contact us at [volunteer@nkfs.org](mailto:volunteer@nkfs.org)

# Is getting **DIALYSIS** the same as getting a **WORKING KIDNEY**

No. Dialysis is a life-sustaining treatment for patients who are waiting for a kidney transplant. Dialysis can only cleanse and remove the blood of toxins, extra salt and fluids through a dialysis machine. Unlike a healthy working kidney, dialysis cannot replace 100% of a kidney's functions. For instance, dialysis cannot produce an active form of vitamin D that keeps the bones strong and healthy. As such, many dialysis patients suffer from bone diseases and other complications.

Kidney transplant on the other hand, allows patients to receive a working kidney and usually, it can substitute almost fully the lost functions of the failed kidneys. It is the most optimal solution to kidney failure enabling patient to lead a normal life.

(Source: kidney.org)

## How does a kidney transplant work?

During the procedure, the donated kidney is connected to the recipient's blood vessels and bladder. The new kidney will be placed in the lower part of the abdomen. The recipient's original kidneys are usually not removed. That's why kidney transplant patients have 3 kidneys in their bodies!

## Is it better to have a transplant early?

Yes. Transplants before starting dialysis or within the first 2 years of dialysis are the most successful and can prevent dialysis-related health problems.

## What is live kidney donation?

There are two types of kidney transplants:

### Cadaveric Donations

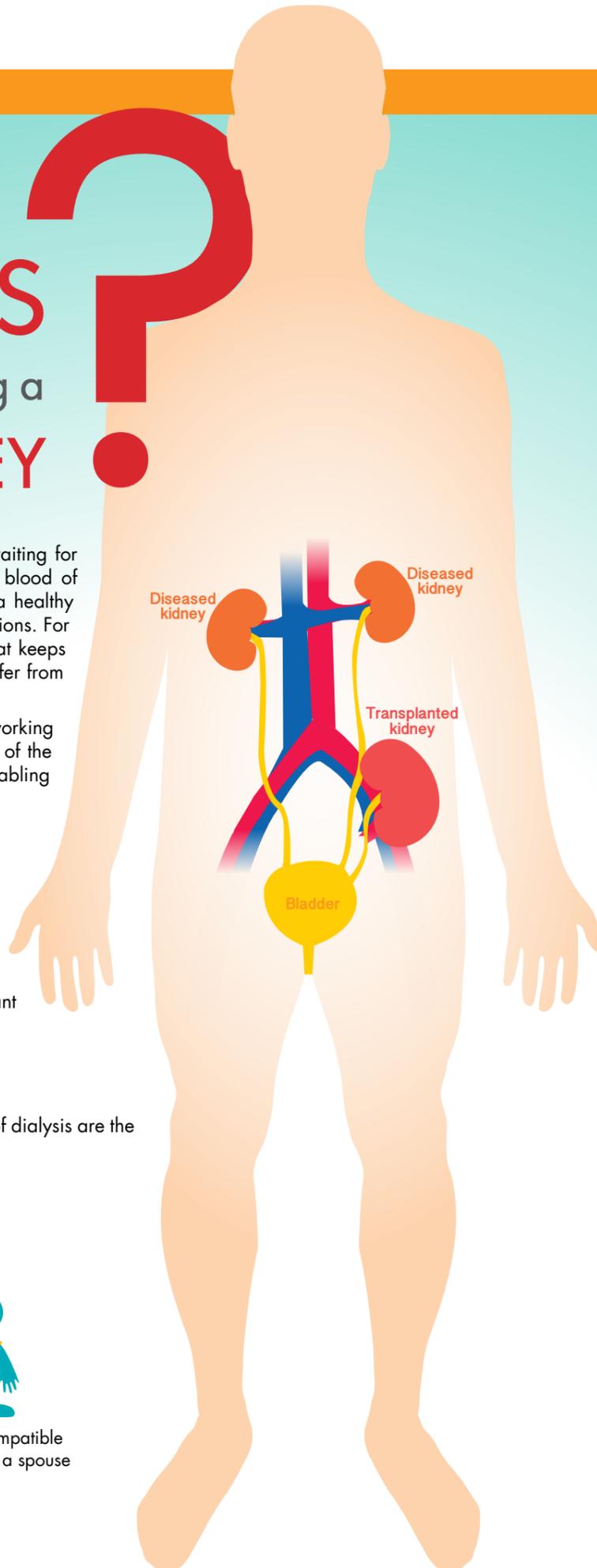


The patient can receive a kidney from a recently deceased person

### Live Kidney Donations



The patient may receive a compatible kidney from a family member, a spouse or a close friend



## Who can be a living donor?

A living donor is a volunteer who is/has

- 1 **physically healthy**
- 2 **does not have kidney disease**
- 3 **a blood type that matches the recipient**

Donors do not have to be same race, age, or gender as the recipient.

## Is there a difference in survival rates between live kidney and cadaveric transplants?

Yes. Not only do living donor organs function better, they also last longer.

It was found that after 5 years after a transplant, the patient survival rate is 99.1% compared to 91.5% of cadaveric donations.

(Source: SGH website, Singapore Health, May/June 2013)

## What is recovery like after donation and how long does it take?

The average hospital stay for donors is 2-4 days.

After being discharged from the hospital, donors may rest at home for a week as their body starts to recuperate.

Over time, most donors can drive and return to their normal lives in 4-6 weeks.

## Will a living donor have health problems after donating?

Research has shown that most living donors remain just as healthy after donation as people who have not donated.

For most donors, the remaining kidney works fine for the rest of their lives and they are not more likely to get kidney disease after donating.

## What is the cost of a transplant surgery? Is there any form of financial assistance if I cannot afford the cost?

Kidney transplant recipients and donors can generally draw on MediShield Life and Medisave for hospital bills and selected outpatient treatments at Restructured Hospitals (RHs). Needy Singaporeans can seek further assistance from Medifund.

In addition, the NKF's "Kidney Live Donor Support Fund" provides financial assistance to needy living kidney donors for kidney transplant-related medical welfare and insurance. Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents who are referred by RHs and meet the NKF means test criteria can apply for this Fund.



**NKF's "Kidney Live Donor Support Fund" provides financial assistance for needy live kidney donors. Find out more about this programme.**

1800-KIDNEYS (5436397) [contact\\_us@nkfs.org](mailto:contact_us@nkfs.org) <http://goo.gl/eLB4EA>

## YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT TO US!

We constantly strive to improve our services to our patients, strengthen our partnerships in the community and better serve our donors. If you have any suggestions or ideas to help us do better, we will be happy to hear from you.

## HAVE A QUESTION CONCERNING YOUR KIDNEYS?

Email us (with subject header - Q&A) and the selected question/s will be answered and published in the next issue.

1800-KIDNEYS (5436397)

[contact\\_us@nkfs.org](mailto:contact_us@nkfs.org)

[www.nkfs.org](http://www.nkfs.org)



# CONNECTING CLOSER WITH YOU!

Look out for a change starting with our next issue