

nkf

July 2017

connect

Making It Despite the Odds

Page 10



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Foreword

Thank you for giving Life & Hope to our needy kidney patients.

We now bring you a brand new look and refreshed content starting from this issue. With Nurses' Day around the corner, **In Focus** provides you with some interesting fun facts about the nursing profession and we zoom in on Madam Haziza's story in **Cover Feature**, where she beats the odds to become a qualified renal nurse. Indeed, Haziza's strive for life-long learning in order to meet the ever-changing and complex needs of the patients is an epitome of our nurses' dedication and commitment.

You can also read inspiring stories of kidney donor Mr Ng Chai Lai, who continues to lead a healthy and meaningful life four years after giving a kidney to his fiancée, as well as kidney patient Ms Koh Wan Ting who is doing well on home-based peritoneal dialysis.

Besides continuing to update you on the work we are doing and how you are making a difference in the lives of our patients and beneficiaries, we also include new segments to empower you to take charge of your health with tips on diet and exercise in **Health Bites** and **Fitness Connection**. Additionally, we have an all-new **Q & A** with our Medical Director Dr Nandakumar, to debunk common myths and misconceptions you may have regarding kidneys and kidney diseases. Do send us your query and the selected questions will be answered and published in the next issue.

The remaking of **NKF connect** aims to stay attuned to your interests and needs in our journey towards a healthier and happier population. We hope that you find it appealing and informative.

Each and every one of our patients are facing the future with strength and courage because of your strong support and belief in our cause. With you firmly behind us, we can carry on unrelentingly to provide affordable dialysis treatment and care to every needy kidney patient and encourage healthy living in the community.

Our heartfelt gratitude, once again, for partnering us in our mission to make lives better. Enjoy reading this all-new issue!

The Editorial Team

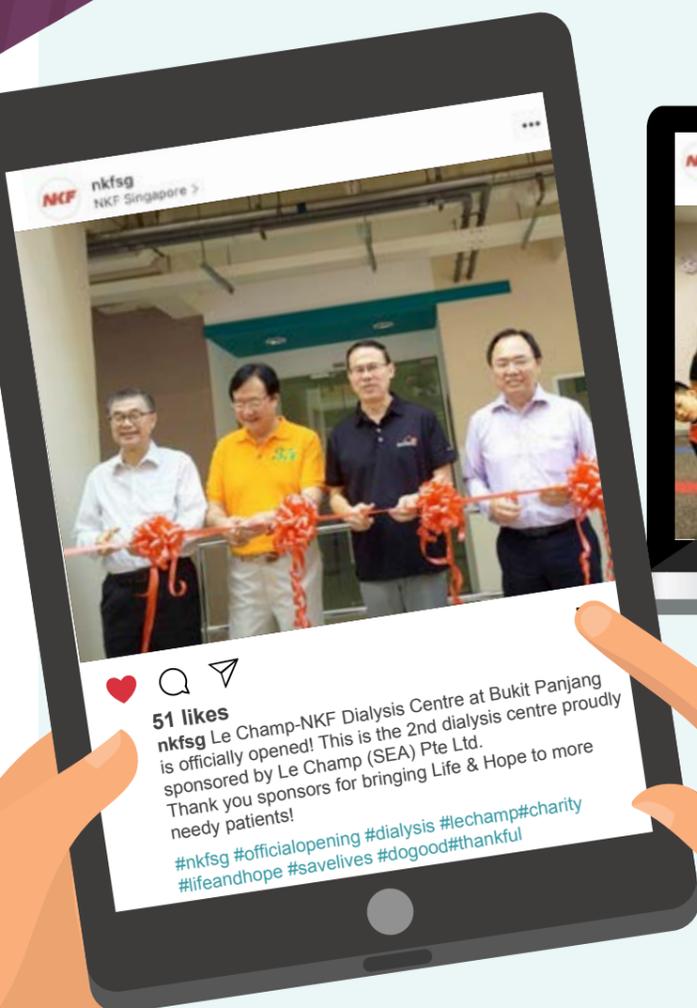
Contents

Social Pulse	4	
In Focus	5	
What's Happening?	6	
The Heart to Give	8	
Cover Feature	10	
Saving People, Changing Lives	12	
Helping Hands	13	
Health Bites	14	
Fitness Connection	15	
A Closer Look	16	
Meet the Team	18	
Q & A	19	



#NKFSG

Follow us on Instagram now!



Nurses are often described as the next best thing to angels. Singapore celebrates Nurses' Day on 1 August every year to honour and recognise the invaluable contributions of nurses who are committed to providing round-the-clock care for the sick. While their dedication, compassion and tender care are commonly known to us, here are some interesting facts you may want to know!

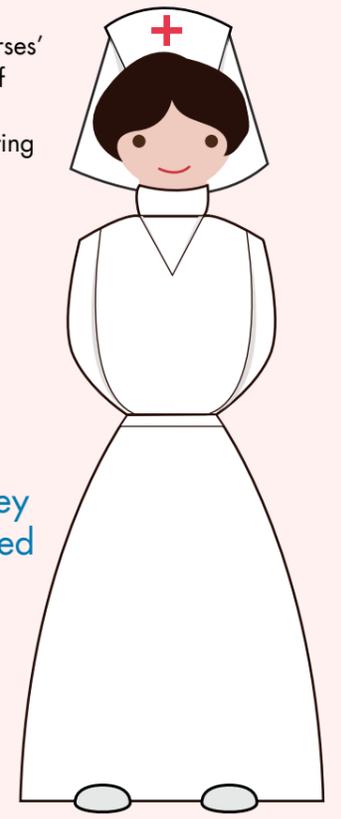


Other countries celebrate Nurses' Day on 12 May, the birthday of Florence Nightingale



Uniform

The first nursing uniform consisted of a dress, an apron and a cap, derived from the nun's habit, as they provided care to the sick and injured prior to the foundation of modern nursing in the 19th century



White

Traditionally, nurses wore white so soldiers can better differentiate nurses from servants, cooks and laundresses in the civil war era



Healthcare in Singapore

More than 50% of the total healthcare personnel in Singapore are nurses, the backbone of the the healthcare industry



Nursing Population

There are about 30,000 registered nurses in Singapore, a steady increase since 2010



A Multi-Sensory Journey Awaits You

Discover the wonders of your kidneys through a guided tour at our newly revamped Kidney Discovery Centre (KDC) now! Our new KDC exhibits, which come equipped with technology such as motion detectors and touch screens, will elevate your learning experience in kidney health in a more exciting and engaging way.



Visitors can use the tablets to scan the displayed food items and calculate the total calories and sugar content of each meal. They can then use a motion sensing device to simulate exercises to burn off calories "consumed" from the virtual meal.



Make a group booking now!
education@nkfs.org

Walk-ins are welcome every **Friday**, from **9am to 4pm** (except public holidays)

Mr Ng Chee Meng, Minister for Education (Schools), who officially re-opened the KDC on 17 April 2017, tries out an interactive workout. Established in 2011, the KDC has seen over 30,000 visitors to date including 150 schools.



Another New Dialysis Centre of **Life & Hope**

Le Champ-NKF Dialysis Centre (Bukit Panjang Branch)

- Officially opened on 6 May 2017 at Blk 275 Bangkit Road
- \$2.1 million sponsorship from Le Champ (SEA) Pte Ltd
- 16 dialysis stations serving 96 patients

Call Our New Toll-free Hotline: **1800-KIDNEYS (5436397)** to find out more!

Our new hotline serves as a one-stop resource centre where patients and members of the public can find out more information about our services such as our dialysis admission process, volunteer and donation programmes, as well as measures to prevent kidney failure.



From left: Special Guest Mr Liang Eng Hwa, MP for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC; Guest-of-Honour Dr Teo Ho Pin, Mayor of North West District and MP for Bukit Panjang SMC; Mr Koh Poh Tiong, NKF Chairman; Mr Michael Chng, Le Champ Founder; and Mrs Eunice Tay, NKF CEO at the opening ceremony of the new dialysis centre and the launch of the new hotline.

World Gourmet Summit 2017: **NKF Charity Gala Dinner**



Middle row: Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health (3rd from left); Mr Koh Poh Tiong, NKF Chairman (4th from left); Mr Edmund Toh, President, Singapore Chefs Association (extreme right), with the award-winning chefs and NKF team on the occasion of our 48th anniversary on 6 April 2017. With the strong support of many caring people, NKF raised over \$1.1 million, surpassing our target of \$800,000, which will greatly benefit needy kidney patients. Our gratitude to Mr Peter Knipp, Principal of Peter Knipp Holdings for making this collaboration possible and managing the event.

Giving back to society

Business partners Mr David Tan and Mr Jeffrey Han from Sin Hong Thai Engineering Pte Ltd teamed up to donate dialysis machines and since 2010, they have donated a total of 20 dialysis machines. As they enjoyed financial success in their business after years of hard work, they remain committed to help needy kidney patients with the hope of easing the demand for dialysis treatment.

“There are people out there who care and are concerned. I want to reassure patients that they are not alone in this.”

Mr Jeffrey Han (left in photo)



“After seeing what kidney patients go through during dialysis, I decided that I wanted to donate dialysis machines.”

Mr David Tan



If you would like to make a donation, please visit www.nkfs.org/support-us/make-a-donation



Striving to be that someone

To give patients the strength and courage to continue on in their journey of life, Mr and Mrs Teo Tat Beng and their family donated three dialysis machines. Mr Teo has also been making monthly LifeDrops donations for close to 10 years to benefit the poor and sick patients.

“Life is a tough and long journey, especially during dire times. We think it is heartening for patients and their families to know that someone does care. We strive to be that someone.”

Mr and Mrs Teo Tat Beng



Joining hands to save lives

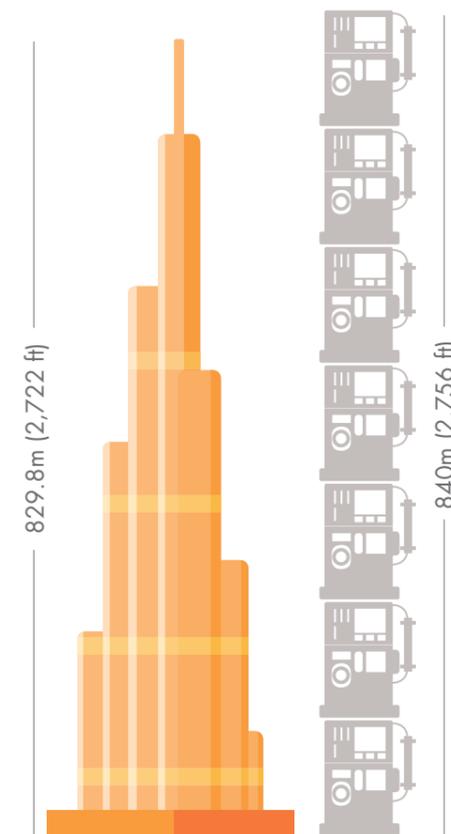
More than 50 residents of Blossom Residences and Mr Liang Eng Hwa, MP for Holland - Bukit Timah GRC joined hands to sponsor a new dialysis machine at one of our dialysis centres in Bukit Panjang to benefit more needy patients residing there.

“Kidney failure is something that affects more and more Singaporeans each day. To know that we can help patients with their dialysis treatment has allowed us to come together as a community, with a common goal of lending a hand to the needy and the less fortunate.”

Mr Abel Goh (3rd from right in photo) Representative of Blossom Residences

Did you know?

If NKF's **700** dialysis machines in service are stacked up, they would be taller than the **highest building in the world**, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai!



- The dialysis machine is the lifeline of every haemodialysis (HD) patient that comes to us for life-sustaining treatment.
- Patients are connected to the dialysis machine, where their blood is pumped and filtered through the artificial kidney, which removes waste products and excess water.
- During a 4-hour dialysis session, a dialysis machine can filter around 84 litres of blood for one patient. Our kidneys, in comparison, pump around 180 litres of blood each day!
- One dialysis machine can support six patients and has a lifespan of around eight years, providing about 30,000 hours of dialysis treatment.

Making It

Despite the Odds



“With a nursing diploma, I will be better qualified and equipped to help patients even more in a holistic way. It will certainly open up my mind and help me think out-of-the-box.”

Haziza Hassan

Madam Haziza Hassan's calling to become a nurse took root when she joined NKF as a dialysis assistant in 1991. At that time, she was 27 years old and a kidney patient herself, receiving dialysis treatment at NKF. She had been diagnosed with kidney failure in 1983 due to acute inflammation of the kidneys, known as glomerulonephritis*.

Started as a Dialysis Assistant

Haziza had always aspired to be a nurse after her secondary education. Her opportunity came when the nurses at the dialysis centre encouraged her to join as a dialysis assistant when they saw the passion in her. NKF fixed her work schedule around her four-hour, thrice weekly dialysis sessions.

She aspired to help kidney patients not just medically, but also by taking care of their emotional, psychosocial and nutritional needs. She wanted to do more for kidney patients because being a patient herself, she could relate to their plight. As many of her fellow Malay patients had difficulties understanding English, she particularly wanted to educate them on the dialysis regime to improve their well-being and see positive outcomes in their rehabilitation.

Her life turned around when in 1994, she received a kidney transplant, which enabled her to lead a life free of dialysis and have a better quality of life. It gave her more time to focus on her job and pursue her goal of becoming a nurse.

Received her Nursing Qualifications

With a sponsorship from NKF, she pursued her studies to become an enrolled nurse, graduating with distinction. The experiences and skills she acquired as an enrolled nurse enabled her to help patients better in their dialysis journey. In April last year, she started her education for a Diploma in Nursing to become a registered nurse and will be graduating in 2018.

“The saddest thing is to see a kidney patient give up on life. I want to excel as a renal nurse so I can help treat them, support them and give them the courage to live and lead fulfilling lives.”

Never Too Old to Learn

Haziza will be 54 years old and the oldest student to graduate in her batch. Despite being much older than her peers, she has no issue coping and keeping up with them, doing extremely well in her first semester.

“If there is an opportunity to study or upgrade your skills, just grab it, no matter what age you are. You never know how you can make a difference in not only your life, but someone else's life as well.”

Haziza, who is a single parent, says that her studying has rubbed off on her son Naziree Irfan. Seeing his mother pursuing her education has motivated him to excel in his studies. Last year, he received an Edusave Award for getting good grades in secondary two. His ambition is to become a pilot.

Haziza's determination and commitment to become a full-fledged nurse serves as a great motivation, especially to those around her, not to give up and to reach for the stars.

*Glomerulonephritis is inflammation of the tiny filters in the kidneys. It can come on suddenly (acute) or gradually (chronic). It occurs on its own or as part of another disease, such as lupus or diabetes. Severe or prolonged inflammation associated with glomerulonephritis can damage the kidneys. Treatment depends on the type of glomerulonephritis one has.

If you, or someone you know, is keen to join NKF for a rewarding and enriching profession in renal care, please contact

hr@nkfs.org



“I’m Doing Well” After Donating My Kidney

Chai Lai



It was the ultimate gift of love when Mr Ng Chai Lai, 49, donated his kidney in 2013 to give his fiancée Ms Chua Bee Leng, 49, a new lease of life. Four years on, both are doing well. Bee Leng is living a better quality of life, one that is free of dialysis. Here, Chai Lai shares his experience from his perspective as a living kidney donor and how he is just as happy and healthy as ever.

What was your transplant journey like?

I had to undergo a very thorough process in order to be cleared for the transplant surgery. Actually, my blood type did not match Bee Leng’s, but thanks to the advancement of medical technology, blood group-incompatible transplant is now possible. The hospital also helped prepare me psychologically for the transplant. I got all the support I needed.

Did you have any fear when it came to donating your kidney?

Yes, but I think it is only natural for one to feel that way. My fears were quelled when I was assured that I could lead a normal, healthy life with one kidney. I confidently made the decision to be a donor because Bee Leng needed my help, and that was what I should focus on. Thanks to NKF’s “Kidney Live Donor Support Fund”, I also did not have to worry about the transplant costs.

Has your life been affected in any way post-transplant?

My life has not changed. I only need to visit the hospital once a year for check-ups and do not have to pay the fees because of support from NKF. The doctor said that my kidney is healthy. Exercise is not an issue at all. I can continue my running and can even take my physical fitness test when I go for my army reservist. In terms of diet, I simply drink more water and take food that has less sugar, salt and oil.

What thoughts would you share with someone considering being a living kidney donor?

If there is a chance to save your loved one, take it. Don’t be afraid to become a donor. The transplant will not affect your life. In fact, my hospital transplant coordinator once told me that a study showed that donors tend to stay healthier than an average person because they are more conscious of their condition!



Bringing Sunshine to Patients’ Lives

Through NKF’s Project Sunshine, volunteer Ms Ho Lay Khim, 48, has been trained as a para-counsellor to help patients psychosocially and emotionally, which is an important part in patients’ continuing journey towards rehabilitation. Her role as a para-counsellor is a supporting one in step-down care to NKF’s full-time counsellor.

Lay Khim underwent four modules of training which started last August. The topics included basic counselling skills, understanding kidney patients’ medical condition and their challenges among others.

The mother of two, who also holds a full-time job as an administrator at a telecommunications company, said that part of her role is to share the importance of self-care and to encourage patients to generate self-help options in their daily lives. She took up this voluntary position as she has always wanted to be a teacher or counsellor.

In April, Lay Khim was extremely heartened after the delivery of her first para-counselling session with the guidance of NKF’s counsellor. She shared that the patient was very receptive and open to her. As a former

“Your heart has to be with the patient. If you have compassion, things will start happening.”

Lay Khim

nasal and lymphoma cancer patient, Lay Khim is able to relate to the anxieties and stress that comes with an illness. “The patient I’m helping is recovering from depression and has personal baggage,” said Lay Khim. “My role is to provide a listening ear, be a source of support and to do my best to encourage self-help.”

She hopes to continue counselling the patient for as long as she needs it. “I will just walk this path with her as long as she lets me.”



To find out more about Project Sunshine, please contact volunteer@nkfs.org



Breakfast... More Than Just a Meal

Skipping breakfast may lead to many risk factors, including obesity, high cholesterol, and diabetes, which may increase the risk of kidney failure over time.

- Breakfast should be taken within 2 hours from the time of waking up to replenish loss of nourishment during sleep
- Try to eat breakfast at the start of the day, otherwise hunger pangs will result in overeating at lunch and dinner
- Physical strength and endurance can be built by eating breakfast
- Eating breakfast improves moods and concentration levels, and reduces stress levels

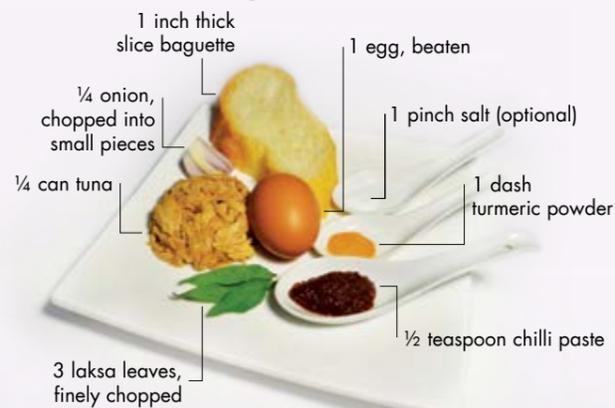
Nutrition Information (Per serving: 259kcal)

Carbohydrate: 16g	Fat: 13g	Protein: 21g
Sodium: 358mg	Cholesterol: 164mg	

Healthy Otah Baguette

Choosing the right type of breakfast matters too! Otah Baguette is a simple recipe rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which may help decrease triglycerides, reduce blood clotting, lower risk of stroke and heart failure.

Ingredients



Instructions: Serving size 1

1. Add tuna into the egg mix
2. Heat and fry chilli with turmeric powder and onions till fragrant
3. Add egg mixture into the frying pan
4. Fry everything together and roll
5. Switch off the stove, sprinkle laksa leaves onto the hot egg
6. Serve on a slice of baguette

Recipe contributed by:
Chong Oi Foon, Patient of Yishun 1 Dialysis Centre



Do you look the same even with regular exercise?

It is common for many not to notice visible changes to their body even with regular exercise routines. While commitment is key, high intensity interval trainings can burn calories effectively, improve muscular endurance in the arms, chest, glutes and abdomen, whipping your body into shape!

Try including push-ups with burpees into your exercise routine. Such workout helps to lower blood pressure as well as cholesterol levels. Being a convenient workout that does not require any equipment, it gives you an additional reason to try it out!

Tips

Pair workout with several small meals throughout the day instead of the usual 3 main meals.
You can better control hunger pangs, blood sugar, and it also keeps your metabolism going!



1 Push your hips back, bend your knees, and lower your body into a squat



2 Place your hands on the floor, shifting your weight on them



3 Jump your feet back to softly land on the balls of your feet into a plank position



4 While in a plank position, do a pushup



6 Jump up as high as you can



5 Pull your feet forward while lifting your hands off the ground, back to position 2

“I’m a Fighter”

20 year-old Ms Koh Wan Ting was born with kidney disease. It was another devastating blow to her family, especially her mother, who had lost her first child to kidney failure. Wan Ting was constantly in and out of hospital throughout her young life.

In 2010, at the age of 13, she had complications with her kidneys and had to be in the intensive care unit for several months. In December that year, she had to start peritoneal dialysis (PD) treatment as her kidneys had failed completely. Wan Ting is under the care of the Children’s Kidney Centre (CKC) at the National University Hospital, which was established by NKF in 2002 to give a lifeline to children with kidney diseases.

Support from Family and Friends

It was during her primary and secondary school days that Wan Ting struggled

to cope with the consequences of her illness. She had to miss her secondary one year-end examination. Her friends in school did not understand what she was going through and looked at her differently. They made fun of her and even gave her nicknames. It was during this difficult period in her life that Wan Ting had thoughts of taking her own life. However, her parents and two siblings gave her strong emotional support. She also drew strength and encouragement from her doctors, nurses and social worker, as well as peers at the CKC as being kidney patients themselves, they could relate to her pain and suffering.

Her Life is Not Disrupted with PD

Wan Ting undergoes PD in the comfort of her own home. It also provides greater convenience because, unlike haemodialysis, she does not have to travel to a dialysis centre every other day to receive treatment.

She does her 10-hour treatment every night where the PD catheter in her abdomen is connected to a PD machine. She carries out the entire PD process by herself. Most of her dialysis time is taken up while she sleeps at night. While on PD and before she turns in for the night, she does stretching exercises so that she does not feel tired, listens to music and is active on social media to connect with others. Doing these things keeps her mind occupied and helps her think less about her condition, allowing her to overcome her fears and anxieties.



“When I was younger, I thought having kidney failure would hinder my life. It is just a condition. With PD, I can still do the things I want to do.”

Wan Ting

PD also gives her more flexibility as during the day, she can study, play and socialise without any disruption to her daily schedule.

Determined to Make the Most Out of Her Life

In 2014, Wan Ting entered an ITE College to study Human Resource and Administration. Her teachers and schoolmates had been very supportive of her mental well-being and academic progress.

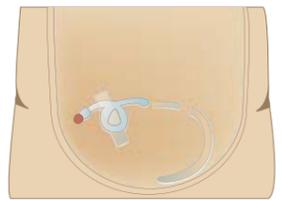
With all the support provided, she managed to fast-track her four-year course to three years, graduating last May. She is now furthering her studies in Business Study Grouping at a polytechnic.

“Before, I dwelled in self-pity. Now, I smile a lot. I’ve learned that it is important to love oneself and have the right mindset.”

What is Peritoneal Dialysis (PD)?

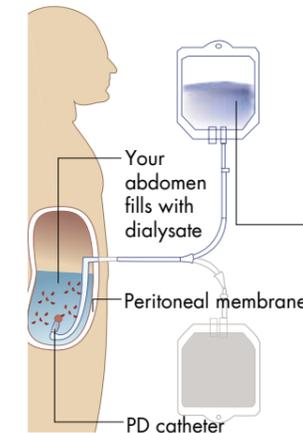
Step 1

A permanent catheter will be placed in the abdominal cavity.



Step 2

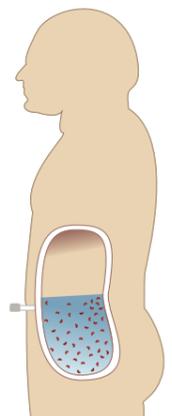
Dialysis solution flows into the abdomen.



A bag of dialysate is connected to a tube (catheter) in the abdomen

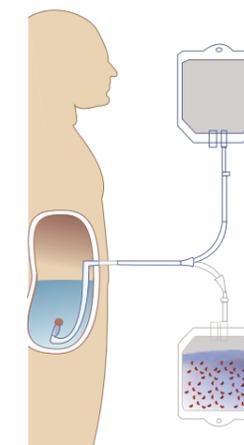
Step 3

Dialysis in progress. Waste, fluid and chemicals flow through the peritoneal membrane into the dialysate.



Step 4

The ‘used’ PD solution is then drained out and replaced with another two litres of fresh PD solution (exchange).



Our PD Community Support Programme provides a spectrum of holistic care.

Contact us at
pd.support@nkfs.org



Our unsung hero...

30,000 hours of selfless giving

Ms Wang Junmei has been with NKF for the past 18 years. The senior medical social worker combines a caring and cheerful disposition with diligence in providing all-round care for a multitude of emotional, psychological, social and financial issues faced by patients and their families.

Relentless work

While NKF's medical team provides clinical treatment and care to patients, medical social workers like Junmei help them cope with their illness, job instability, financial burden and family discord. Junmei also works with hospital teams and social welfare agencies to provide support to needy patients. Her challenging work as a front-liner and the more than 30,000 hours she has ground out thus far to care for her patients, exemplify her dedication and compassion in rebuilding and transforming lives.

Above and beyond

Junmei has many heartwarming stories to share. One that stands out was when she journeyed with a patient who was a single mum caring for her blind and deaf son. Understanding that the patient did not want to place her son in a nursing home as he was injured previously, Junmei persevered and sourced for funding support. After great efforts and much coordinated care, the patient now goes for her dialysis treatment with a peace of mind knowing that her son is well cared for.

Always responsive

Many of her cases may seem run-of-the-mill, but Junmei listens to them, shares their joys and sorrows and is responsive to their needs. Making a difference little by little, day-in and day-out to those who are downtrodden matters greatly to her, as it ultimately has an impact on their road to recovery. Indeed, Junmei's role epitomises the work of a medical social worker at NKF – our silent crusaders who strive on with passion to give needy kidney patients support, hope and the belief that they can make it in life.



For her tireless work in caring for the sick and needy, Junmei received the prestigious Healthcare Humanity Award 2017 from Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health.

I am 38 years old and had kidney stones 2 years ago. While I was in my early 20s, I had kidney stones twice. Does this increase my risk of kidney failure?

Jonathan Tang

Dear Jonathan,

Kidney stones occur when mineral salts crystallise in the kidneys. Tiny crystals pass out of the body in urine but the larger stones cause a back-up of urine in the kidneys, ureter and the bladder, causing pain.

Untreated kidney stones might indeed increase the risk of kidney failure, causing blockage in blood urine flow. This can eventually result in a dilated kidney with minimal function.

However, the percentage of kidney failure related to kidney stone is small compared to diabetes and hypertension. In addition, kidney stones usually cause pain, hence are very seldom left untreated till its deterioration to kidney failure. Kidney stones usually cause damage to one kidney and kidney failure, also known as End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) happens only when both kidneys do not function properly.

There is also the likely occurrence of "silent" stones, which cause no pain and symptoms. They are often left untreated for long months to years, occasionally leading to kidney damage. One in 10 people will develop kidney stones at some stage of their lives. It is best to prevent them by drinking 2 to 3 liters of water, reduce the consumption of oxalate-rich foods like spinach, chocolate, nuts, tea, soya products, berries and salt and increase calcium intake. Specific measures to treat kidney stones, depend on the type of kidney stones. It is important to do a chemical analysis of the stone. Prevention is always better than cure as the saying goes.

I often encounter an ache at my lower back. I have read somewhere that it is a symptom of kidney failure. Is it true?

Pravin D.

Dear Pravin,

Back pain is not usually a symptom of most types of kidney disease. When kidneys become distended due to blockage of the flow of urine or become infected, it may produce pain. Severe pain may also occur with the presence of kidney stones, especially when the stones move down the ureter. Other causes of back pain also include muscle pain or diseases of the spine.

The term kidney disease does not equate to kidney failure. We say kidney failure only when the functions of the kidneys are compromised and are unable to maintain normal composition of the body fluids which will most likely result in the accumulation of toxins in the body.

Symptoms of kidney failure can vary between different people. Do look out for other symptoms:

- Decreased urination
Nausea and vomiting
Swollen hands and ankles
Puffiness around the eyes
Itching
Sleep disturbances
High blood pressure
Loss of appetite

Put your mind at ease by going for a screening if you encounter any of the symptoms.

Have a question concerning your kidneys?



Have your concerns addressed by our in-house doctor, Dr Mooppil Nandakumar, Director of Medical Services

contact_us@nkfs.org

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

Long long time ago Long long time ago Charity Carnival

Marina Barrage
5 & 6 Aug 2017 (Sat & Sun)
11am to 8pm

Guest-of-Honour
Dr Amy Khor
Senior Minister of State for Environment
and Water Resources & Health

Reminisce the good old days of the 70s and 80s! Traditional local food, nostalgic games, kid-friendly activities and an outdoor movie screening await you! All funds raised from the carnival will go towards supporting needy kidney patients with artificial kidneys (A.K.), which are crucial in sustaining their lives.



Movie screening on 5 Aug, 7.30pm



"Fantasia" Bouncy Castle



Jump, Bounce, Boing!



Purchase your carnival coupons at <https://friends.nkfs.org/CharityCarnival2017>

In partnership with:

