

# NKF CONNECT



Caring for Our Patients



## Living an Extra-ordinary Life



**A 'fighter' in her life journey, NKF patient, Ms Lim Sheng Yun is a force to be reckoned with in her quest to live life to the fullest.**



### Features



**Encouraging Volunteerism** 4

Finding strength from being a volunteer



**Safeguarding Your Health** 5

Providing free health screening to the community



**Involving the Community** 8

Donations from our temple sponsors

## Caring for Our Patients

### A life worth living

45-year-old Ms Lim Sheng Yun was diagnosed with kidney failure 16 years ago. She was on Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) with a hospital until 2002 when she joined the NKF Haemodialysis Programme at Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services-NKF Dialysis Centre.

Sheng Yun feels very grateful to be able to join the NKF programme. "Here at the NKF, the nurses show that they care for the patients. They monitor my weight before each dialysis and really make an effort to get to know me and treat me nicely. They also make an effort to talk to me, thus helping my hours pass quickly".

Recounting an unforgettable incident with another female patient whom Sheng Yun has grown close to, nurse Nana went beyond her duties to massage the patient's back for a good 20 minutes to relief her physical discomfort.

"I can see that the nurses really care about us at the dialysis centre and I've gotten to know the nurses and am so comfortable with them."

Ever grateful to the donors for their donation to NKF, Sheng Yun mentioned that her dialysis costs have since been reduced from \$1,400 when she first started on dialysis, to \$50 now.

"I'm so thankful to NKF for all the help; this has given me hope to face the days ahead".

- Patient, Ms Lim Sheng Yun

### Adopting new skills

Ms Lim is currently a part-time clerk with Richfield Technology but her interest lies in hairdressing now. She was reluctant to pursue it when she was younger as "it was considered a job that people who cannot study do". Now, she feels that the social stigma associated with hairdressing has evolved with time and it is considered a skill worth acquiring, as well as a respectable profession.

When asked if she is keen to carve a career out of hairdressing, Ms Lim giggled and said she is merely pursuing an interest she lost out on before. She went on to add that with the help from Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC), courses have now become much more affordable for those with lower income. At the end of her hairdressing course with Kimage Hairdressing School, Ms Lim will receive an ITE accredited professional qualification.



## Facts in Singapore

### Incidence of Kidney Failure

- 5<sup>th</sup> highest in the world
- About 750 people are diagnosed with kidney failure every year

### Diabetes

- Number of Singaporeans with diabetes: 300,000
- 49.4% of these Singaporeans have not been previously diagnosed
- 8<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in Singapore with 3% of all deaths being attributable to diabetes
- Can lead to kidney failure, heart disease, blindness, impotence, nerve damage and limb amputation

Ms Lim has hopes of putting this skill to a worthy cause. She wants to volunteer her hairdressing services to needy NKF patients. She believes in volunteerism despite being a patient herself, as she feels that it is in everyone's capacity to give, however little. "This is life. I prefer to live doing something than doing nothing."



## Looking beyond her own condition

In her free time, Ms Lim helps out in various old folks' homes and children's homes, by giving children free tuition, or taking part in fundraising events. Given her vitality for life, it is difficult to believe she is diagnosed with kidney failure, much less the fact that Ms Lim also suffers from rheumatic heart disease. Her optimism and energy is so inspiring that hospital doctors have called on her to motivate other patients.

"You have to face it! I have been on dialysis for so long and am still surviving. I do not show 'face' to my family because there is no point in burdening them. Only I can help myself."



## NKF's New Initiatives

As the new NKF focuses on being a patient-centric organisation, we are constantly looking at ways to benefit patients by providing them with enhanced holistic health care or lessening their financial burden. The following are initiatives that we have carried out for patients for the first quarter of 2008:

**1** Free blood tests are provided to all patients with effect from 1 April 2008. NKF now bears the cost of approximately \$584,000 per year (based on 2,000 patients to date). These regular blood-tests are necessary to measure the effectiveness of their dialysis. On average, a patient needs to undergo 10 blood tests per year.

*\* Excludes Civil Service Card holders*

**2** A Patient Welfare Fund was set up to look into needy patients' other areas of need to further supplement their living expenses as well as improve their quality of life. These include:

- Monthly food vouchers worth \$25 per month given to 143 patients
- Transport reimbursement to and from home and dialysis centre given to 14 patients
- Subsidies for medical equipment such as clutches and wheel chairs

**3** We have collaborated with Singapore FootCare Centre and Care Management Centre to provide our 800 diabetic patients with cheaper foot checks and related foot care treatment. With this initiative, the cases of leg amputation among diabetic patients could be reduced.

### Hypertension

- Number of Singaporeans with hypertension: 500,000
- 38.5% of these Singaporeans have not been previously diagnosed
- Can lead to stroke and heart failure

Source: The National Health Survey 2004 and USRDS 2004

## Encouraging Volunteerism

# Finding strength from being a Volunteer

Siti may appear to some as an unlikely candidate to become a volunteer. Her mother-in-law and her husband passed away in 2002 and 2003 respectively. And her youngest son was diagnosed with nose cancer shortly after. But by becoming a volunteer, Siti turned from being overwhelmed with her own circumstances to becoming a source of encouragement to others who are less fortunate than her. As a volunteer, she visits the Dialysis Centre regularly to spend time with her four new-found friends while they undergo dialysis.

Double amputee Azizah, who lost her legs to diabetes, is one of the patients who have benefited from Siti's encouragement. Diabetes, where the body is not able to break down sugars in the blood, accounts for six in 10 cases of kidney failure in Singapore. Azizah and her 27-year-old daughter, who accompanies her for dialysis, used to be very quiet and withdrawn. But Siti's selfless-giving and cheerfulness eventually won them over. In fact, Siti has become so close to the family

that she even helped out in the preparation for Azizah's daughter's wedding.

Going beyond visiting patients at the dialysis centres, Siti even visits their homes to offer them traditional Malay massage. Although Siti's days are often long and tiring, she feels her life is very meaningful and she has also learnt to be more positive.



The ever helpful Siti befriending an NKF patient

## Share Your Heart Give Your Time

NKF's Circle of Hearts "Adoption Programme" was launched this year where volunteers pair up in twos to use the \$25 vouchers provided to buy groceries for their adopted patients, and deliver to the patients' homes on a monthly basis. This programme allows volunteers to visit the patients at a more convenient time whilst providing patients with morale support and friendship.

Those who wish to sign up for the "Adoption Programme" can form a group of at least 2 members for the 6-monthly programme to befriend and form lasting friendships with the patients.



**For more information,  
please call 6299 0200 or  
email us at [contact\\_us@nkfs.org](mailto:contact_us@nkfs.org)**



## Safeguarding Your Health

# Providing Free Health Screening to the Community

The buzz started as early as 8am in the morning at Toa Payoh Dialysis Centre's Open House on 16th March 2008. Many members of the public who have pre-registered for the Free Health Screening came early since they have started fasting 10 hours ago. The nurses sprung into action as soon as the details like participants' medical history were filled in.



Members of the public queuing up to be screened

The two leading causes of kidney failure are diabetes and hypertension. Over 500,000 Singaporeans are suffering from hypertension and 300,000 from diabetes. What's more, 49.4% of them who had diabetes and 38.5% who had hypertension have not been previously diagnosed. These statistics indicate that more health promotion programmes aimed at preventing the onset of chronic diseases are needed.

As such, the new NKF continues to provide free health screenings to the community through various avenues such as Dialysis Centre Open House. Every alternate month, NKF opens one of its 24 dialysis centres around the island to members of the public to receive free health screening.

This "Open Door" policy also allows the public to have a first-hand tour of the dialysis centres and see how dialysis is done. By understanding the plight of a kidney patient, it will also help drive home the message of prevention. The health screening usually covers 8 components – Blood Cholesterol Test, Blood Glucose Test, Urinalysis, Blood Pressure Measurement, Body Fat



Analysis, Waist-Hip Ratio, Body Mass Index and Counselling.

The free foot screening sponsored by Singapore Footcare Centre was popular amongst the public too. Many sat in for the talk on how to look for a good pair of shoes and avoid common foot problems. The audience enthusiastically asked the speaker many questions after the session, indicating their interest in the topic.

The real excitement kicked in when the cooking demonstration came on. Those who participated were kidney patients who took time off to share their recipes modified according to their special nutritional needs, and some well-kept secrets like how to cook a good steamed fish. The aroma from the food filled the air as people crowded around the stove to take a closer look at how the dishes were prepared. Needless to say, no cooking demonstration is complete without food tasting. Once the dishes were laid on the table, many gathered around to have a first taste of the dishes. Adopting a healthier eating habit does not necessarily equate to bland or tasteless food; it takes time too as we need to allow our palates to adjust to having food that has less sugar, oil, and salt. However, the pros outweigh the cons.

Cooking demonstration by our patient



Blood being drawn for health screening

## Your Health Matters

# NKF's First Cookbook –

It was an exciting day for both staff and patients when they saw the colourful and yet mouth-watering cover of NKF's very first cook book at the Toa Payoh Dialysis Centre's Open House on 16th March 2008.



Half of the recipes from the cook book was contributed by NKF patients

The recipes were collected from the patients themselves who adopted everyday recipes and modified them into dishes that are suitable for their dietary requirement. Dialysis patients require a much higher intake of protein than the average person. Too little protein and calorie intake often leads to protein energy malnutrition. To achieve good dialysis outcome, patients need to monitor their diet closely so as to help control the waste products and fluids accumulated between dialysis treatments. Therefore, it is essential for patients to have the right amount of protein, calories, fluids, vitamins and minerals each day.



Cooking demonstration by our patient, Ipah Said



A healthy diet for a dialysis patient is:

- adequate in protein
- adequate in calories
- low to moderate in potassium
- low in sodium
- low in phosphorus
- limit in fluids

"The cook book is so affordable at only \$9.95, but more importantly, it teaches us healthy cooking", says Jamaliah, a volunteer at NKF.

Patient should avoid food rich in phosphorus such as:

- All sorts of seafood and sardines, anchovies (*ikan bilis*), dried shrimp paste
- Dairy products e.g. milk, cheese, yogurt
- Bean products e.g. all forms of nuts, seeds, bean soup
- Malted drinks e.g. Milo, Horlicks
- Oats, cereals
- Chocolate
- Organ meats e.g. liver, intestines
- Bone-based soups e.g. chicken feet and pork bone
- Colas

Patient should avoid high potassium food such as:

- Fruits - Banana, melon, persimmon, jackfruit, durian
- Vegetables - Asparagus, carrot, cauliflower, broccoli, bitter gourd, tomato, potato, choy sum, corn and mushroom

Here are two of the recipes from “Tasty Meals Made Healthy”:



## Juicy Meatballs

### Ingredients

Yield: 3 portions    Serving size: 2 meatballs

300g ground beef  
 10g white onion, chopped  
 2 tbsps oatmeal flakes, dry  
 1 egg, beaten  
 ¼ tsp dill, dried  
 ¼ tsp thyme, dried  
 A dash of nutmeg  
 Salt/pepper season to taste

### For the soup:

½ cup white onion, roughly chopped  
 ½ cup leek, diced  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 ¾ tsp vegetable oil  
 600ml water  
 Salt/pepper season to taste

### Nutrient values (per serving)

Calories : 453kcal  
 Protein : 31g  
 Carbohydrates : 50g  
 Fat : 14g  
 Sodium : 87mg  
 Potassium : 838mg  
 Phosphorus : 545mg

### Method of preparation

1. Combine all the meatball ingredients in a large bowl and mix them well with a wooden spoon. Roll the ingredients into 1" balls and set aside.
2. In a heated saucepan, saute the onion with vegetable oil till soft. Add in the leek and garlic and stir for another 2 minutes. Add in the water and bring to a boil.
3. Place the meatballs into the stock and simmer over low-medium heat till done. Season the stock to taste. Serve warm.

*\* Minced pork or chicken can be used to replace ground beef in this recipe.*



## Fresh Vietnamese Salad Rolls

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions    Serving size: 2 ricerolls per serving

500g chicken breast  
 1 tbsp soya sauce, light  
 1 tbsp ground pepper, white  
 500ml water  
 1 small lettuce leaves, separated and washed  
 100g rice vermicelli, blanched and rinsed with cold water  
 1 small cucumber, sliced  
 1 small carrot, shredded  
 1 handful of coriander leaves, chiffonage

12 rice papers, 20cm in diameter  
 3 red chillies, fresh, sliced  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 cup brown sugar  
 60ml water  
 2 tbsps sesame seeds, lightly browned  
 Salt/pepper season to taste

### Nutrient values (per serving)

Calories : 242kcal  
 Protein : 22g  
 Carbohydrates : 31g  
 Fat : 3g  
 Sodium : 221mg  
 Potassium : 311mg  
 Phosphorus : 249mg

### Method of preparation

1. Put the water to boil and add in the soya sauce, pepper and chicken meat. Cook the chicken for 12-14 minutes and allow most of the liquid to evaporate. Allow the chicken to cool when it is done and slice it thinly.
2. To make a spring roll, ensure the soften rice paper is thoroughly dry. Place a lettuce leaf onto the wrapper, closer to one edge and fill it with the vermicelli, cucumber and carrot.
3. Fold in the sides and roll it up halfway, put some chicken slice and a little shredded coriander. Continue to roll it tightly till bundle is formed. Repeat the process with the rest of the ingredients.
4. For the sauce, melt the brown sugar and water in a heated saucepan. Add the chilli and garlic. Simmer for 10 minutes and allow it to cool. Blend the sauce and top it with sesame seeds. Serve the spring rolls with the dipping sauce.

