



The
Kidney
Society

News

Issue No: 247 Feb/Mar/Apr 2026

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



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.

ADMIN AND OPERATIONS TEAM



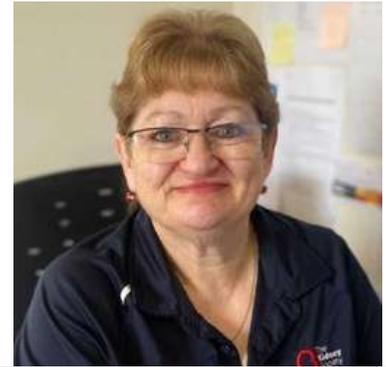
Joanne: Development Manager

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](https://www.instagram.com/kidneysocietyadks)

Visit us

5 Swaffield Road, Papatoetoe,
Auckland

PO Box 97026, Manukau City,
Auckland 2241

Office hours

Monday to Friday
9am – 5pm

Kia ora from Kath

Kia ora koutou,

A very warm welcome to the first edition of The Kidney Society News for 2026. On behalf of the entire team, I wish you and your whānau a healthy, hopeful start to the year ahead.

Whether you're newly diagnosed or have been living with kidney disease for some time, we know the journey can feel overwhelming, especially when you're trying to figure out where to start and what support is right for you. That's why I'm delighted to share some new initiatives we've launched to make it easier to connect, ask questions, and feel supported.

One of these is a free 15-minute call with one of our Health Educators. This is a simple, no-pressure way to talk through your situation, ask questions, and get pointed in the right direction. Whether you're after information, services, or next steps, sometimes a short conversation can make a big difference.

We're also proud to introduce Kidney Connect, our new one-to-one peer support programme. Kidney Connect links people affected by kidney disease with volunteers who have lived experience of kidney disease, donation, or a transplant. The benefits of shared understanding, practical insight and genuine connection can be powerful. Support can happen by phone, online, or in person, whatever works best for you. The programme is open to people living with kidney disease, kidney donors and recipients, and their whānau, carers, and supporters, with connections tailored to individual needs and preferences.



Nutrition continues to be one of the topics we're asked about most. Food is such an important part of life, culture, and wellbeing and it shouldn't feel like a constant source of stress. To help, we've launched Kidney #FoodieFriday across our social media channels. Every Friday, we're sharing kidney-friendly recipes, simple nutrition tips, and easy food swaps to help you enjoy eating while living with kidney disease. It's practical, approachable, and designed for real life.

While there may be a few changes happening this year, one thing remains constant: our unwavering commitment to you. Our focus is always on supporting you to live your best life, in a way that works for you. Thank you for being part of our Kidney Society whānau. Whether you're a client, carer, supporter, volunteer, or health partner, your presence matters, and your voice helps shape the work we do. We genuinely welcome your feedback, ideas, and conversations, so please don't hesitate to reach out.

This edition is packed with helpful information, inspiring stories, and updates from across the kidney community. Whatever the season brings your way, know that we're here for you. I'm really looking forward to connecting with many of you throughout the year ahead.

Ngā manaakitanga,

Kath

Kidney Society Events



12

World Kidney Day

Thursday 12
March 2026

Follow us on social media for the latest updates and what's coming up.

If you missed out on our most recent virtual education session, you can still access it online.

Diabetes & your kidneys: what you need to know education session

*Find more info about
this on page 21*

[Click here to get access >](#)
or scan the QR code below



*See more information about
this session on page 21*

A Life Defined by Resilience, Love, and Positivity



From the age of five, Brian Carkeek often felt unwell. He was constantly tired, slow moving, and lived with ongoing aches and pains. These symptoms followed him throughout his life, yet the underlying cause remained a mystery for decades. It wasn't until after he suffered a stroke at the age of 35 that the condition responsible for his lifelong struggles was finally identified.

Growing up in constant pain and fatigue made Brian feel different from others. As a child, he was teased and labelled as lazy or slothful. Throughout his schooling years, he repeatedly heard, "You'll never amount to anything." As an adult, employers would pull him aside and ask, "What's wrong with you?"

Brian didn't have an answer, and neither did anyone else.

As a teenager, Brian discovered motorcycle racing. While his body had prevented him from participating in most sports, racing gave him a sense of freedom and exhilaration he had never known before.

He was hooked! Not only did he love it, he was good at it — so good that he began winning prize money through professional Speedway Racing. During the 1965–66 season, Brian was promoted to a Grade A rider.

Motorcycle racing, however, came with serious risks. Over the years, Brian experienced countless accidents: broken bones, concussions, bikes written off, time on crutches, and even a diagnosis of poor vision! Despite this, he continued to balance his racing career with full-time work.



During the 1967–68 season, Brian purchased a new motorcycle from a junior rider who was selling both his bikes. Curious about the young man's decision, Brian commented on his riding and asked why he was quitting. The rider explained he had been diagnosed with kidney disease and could no longer race. What Brian didn't know was that his kidneys were also failing. He was suffering frequent nosebleeds, blinding headaches, and near-constant nausea — all undiagnosed.

On the track, Brian's symptoms faded into the background, overtaken by the adrenaline rush of racing. Off the track, his body continued to struggle as his kidney function declined.



In 1967, Brian married the love of his life, Nancy. She would remain steadfastly by his side through countless injuries, setbacks, major operations, and his daily battles with pain and exhaustion. Eventually, Brian was forced to give up motorcycle racing, and his father-in-law welcomed him into the family business, working with machines that sliced and wrapped loaves of bread.

For a short time, Brian turned to kart racing instead. At the age of 35, while competing, he suffered a stroke. His leg would not move, and he was unable to brake. The kart crashed into the pits, and Brian lost consciousness. Two ambulances and a police escort rushed him to hospital.

It was the racetrack doctor who suggested Brian return to his GP and request thyroid testing. At last, answers began to emerge. Brian was diagnosed with **hypercalcemia**, a condition causing his body to produce excessive calcium. While it was a relief to finally have a diagnosis, the effects of the stroke meant Brian had to re-learn how to walk and talk.

Later, doctors discovered the source of the problem — a benign tumour on his parathyroid gland, known as a **parathyroid adenoma**.

The surgery was major, but the results were life-changing. For the next five years, Brian experienced the best health he had ever known. Even so, his GP warned that kidney failure was inevitable and advised him to drink three litres of water a day — advice Brian followed diligently.

Brian's kidneys failed at age 60, and he began dialysis at 61. Nancy immediately offered to be a kidney donor. After almost a year of testing, she was sadly ruled out due to slow filtration. Brian's sister then volunteered, was tested, and proved to be a match.

Following the transplant, Brian experienced complications and was required to return to hospital daily for five months, due to CMV (cytomegalovirus). During this time, he formed close friendships with other transplant recipients who shared the waiting room. They affectionately named themselves “The September Babies.” These bonds, formed through shared experience, have endured for many years, with the group continuing to meet annually.

Despite being told he might not survive longer than seven years, Brian is now celebrating the 24th anniversary of his kidney transplant, his 87th year of life, and 58 years of marriage to his beloved Nancy. He continues to live fully, guided by optimism and gratitude.

After retiring at age 60 due to kidney failure, Brian and Nancy formed a close relationship with the Kidney Society, seeking guidance and support as they navigated kidney disease.

“In the early years, we were so thankful knowing they were there to answer any of our questions,” Nancy recalls. “We got into the habit of visiting their office every September, bringing in morning tea for the staff, and celebrating Brian’s transplant journey together.”

In retirement, Brian turned his energy toward creative pursuits. His garage transformed into a workshop filled with tools and machines.

Inspired by ideas he found online, his attitude was simple: “I can make one of those.” And he did. These complex projects demanded focus and creativity, helping him stay mentally engaged and distracted from life’s challenges.



Through everything — motorcycle accidents, two strokes, major surgeries, chronic pain, kidney failure, and transplant — Nancy has remained by Brian’s side. Their marriage has been a true partnership. When asked what she is most grateful for in life, Nancy fell silent. Tears filled her eyes,

“I’m so grateful to have Brian still with me.”

Each September, Brian and Nancy still visit the Kidney Society office, bringing morning tea and celebrating another year together. For all of us at the Kidney Society, it is a privilege to walk alongside clients over many years — sharing their challenges, supporting them with resources, and celebrating the value they continue to create in their lives.

Brian continues to radiate positivity through his words, actions, humour, and determination to live each day to the fullest.

***“I have Nancy — a true partner and wonderful support person. I also keep myself busy with creative projects, trying new things and pushing my limits.*”**

But really, the biggest secret is: I just do what I’m told! I take advice, obey my doctors, and of course, listen to my wife.”



All of us here at the Kidney Society celebrate with you, Brian and Nancy, for your resilience in life challenges and for your passion to live your best life together.





Healthy Summer Eating on a Budget

Waitematā Renal Dietitians

How can I eat well for less?

Here are our top tips for saving money on your grocery bill while enjoying fresh, nutritious meals this summer.

Shop in season

Seasonal fruit and vegetables are usually cheaper, fresher, and tastier because they are more readily available.



Summer Fruits Aim for 2 serves a day	Summer Vegetables Aim for 5 serves a day
Apples, berries, stone fruit (apricots, plums, nectarines), cherries, grapefruit, green kiwifruit, lemons, melons, pears, tangelos, Valencia oranges	Asparagus, avocado, beans, beetroot, broccoli, buttercup pumpkin, capsicum, carrots, cauliflower, celery, courgettes, cucumber, eggplant, green cabbage, kumara, lettuce, mushrooms, onions, peas, potatoes, pumpkin, radishes, silver beet, snow peas, spinach, spring onions, sweetcorn, tomatoes, watercress

What about potassium, are there fruits or vegetables I should be avoiding?

You can eat any type of fruit and vegetable. They are an important part of a healthy diet. The key is portion size and timing. Stick to the recommended number of serves per day and spread your fruit and vegetable intake across the day, rather than eating large amounts in one sitting. For individual advice, please speak with your kidney dietitian.

Tip: Farmers markets or local fruit & veg stores can sometimes offer better value for seasonal fruits and vegetables than supermarkets.

Buy Bulk, Canned or Frozen

These options can significantly reduce costs and food waste.



Bulk: Buying foods in bulk like vegetables, meat, rice, pasta, or dairy products is often better value for money. See tips for storing food below to help make sure your foods last.

Canned: Canned fruit, vegetables, beans, and lentils are affordable and long-lasting. Choose options canned in water rather than brine or syrups and drain and rinse before use to reduce salt and sugar.

Frozen: Frozen fruit and vegetables are nutritious, convenient, and often cheaper than fresh. They last longer and help reduce food waste. Pre-cut frozen fruit and vegetables are easy to add to meals.

Smart Storage: Make your food last longer

Good storage helps prevent waste and saves money.



Freezer: When you have large portions of meat or cooked meals, freeze leftovers in portions to save for later. Freeze meat you won't use straight away. Use freezer-safe containers or bags. Be sure to date and label items!

Vegetables: Chop carrots or celery and store in a container or jar of water in the fridge to keep them crisp. Keep potatoes, onions, and kumara in a cool, dark place (not the fridge).

Salad leaves: Wash and dry lettuce leaves, then store in a container with a damp paper towel to reduce soggy leaves.

Tip: Give your veggie drawer a quick clean before putting away new produce. This helps prevent mould, bugs and food spoiling too quickly.

Plan your shop

A little time planning can lead to big savings!



Plan your meals, make a list, and stick to it! Shopping lists help stop you from buying food you do not need.

Check what you already have in your pantry, fridge and freezer before shopping. Plan meals around foods you already have such as sauces, cans and freezer items.

Try online shopping - click and collect. Shopping online can reduce temptation and impulse buying from food displays in the grocery store. It makes it easier to compare prices for similar products and spot specials. It can also save time.

Use sales to your advantage. Buy products that are on sale at the time instead of full-priced brand name products. Choose supermarket home brand products as these are often just as good and much cheaper.

Add fillers to stretch meals further

Make meals go further by adding affordable, nutritious ingredients.

- Add grated or finely chopped vegetables (carrot, courgette, pumpkin mushroom) to mince dishes, patties, meatballs, burgers or stir-fries.
- Mix cooked rice, couscous, pasta or noodles through mince dishes or serve as a base to help meals go further without adding extra sauce.
- Use canned lentils, chickpeas or beans (drained and rinsed well) in small amounts to bulk up mince dishes, patties or fritters.

Example: Add a can of drained lentils or chickpeas plus some grated carrot to a mince dish (for tacos or stir-fries) to increase fibre and protein while lowering the cost per serve.

Extra money saving tips

- **Eat less meat:** Try one or two meat-free meals per week by using lentils, chickpeas or eggs as protein instead.
- **Cook once, eat twice:** Plan leftovers for lunch or freeze for another day.
- **Reduce food waste:** Use over-ripe fruit in smoothies, baking or porridge.



- **Drink water:** Water is the cheapest and healthiest drink – limit sugary drinks and juice.
- **Avoid shopping hungry:** You are more likely to buy extra snacks you don't need.

**Eating well on a budget doesn't have to be complicated.
Small changes can add up to big savings while still supporting your health.**

Note: The information contained in this article is designed to provide helpful information to most people. Please also consider your own individual dietary requirements.

Easy Beef & Bean Nachos – Serves 4



Ingredients:

300-400g mince
 1 small onion, finely chopped
 1 clove garlic, crushed (optional)
 1 tsp cumin or mild taco seasoning
 1x 400g tin kidney beans or lentils,
 drained and well rinsed
 1 diced capsicum
 1 grated carrot
 ½ cup grated cheese

Method:

1. Fry mince in pan until browned. Drain any excess fat.
2. Add onion and garlic and cook until soft.
3. Stir through spices
4. Add drained beans and vegetables and cook for a further 3-5 minutes until heated through.

Toppings: shredded lettuce, sour cream

5. Serve over a small portion of corn chips and top with some cheese.

Egg & Veggie Muffins – Makes 12

These freeze well!



Ingredients:

6 eggs
100g finely chopped spinach (fresh or frozen and thawed)
½ cup grated cheese
1 small onion
1 diced capsicum or 100g mushrooms, sliced
Black pepper and dried herbs to taste

**If you don't have spinach, mushroom, or capsicum, you can use any veggies you have on hand.*

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C and lightly grease a muffin tray.
2. Fry onion in a pan until browned. Can also add mushrooms if preferred.
3. Whisk eggs in a bowl. Stir through all vegetables, cheese, and seasoning.
4. Divide mixture evenly between each muffin cup.
5. Bake for 12-15 minutes until set.

Fresh Bean & Couscous Summer Salad – Serves 4



Ingredients:

1 cup dry couscous (prepared according to packet instructions)
1x 400g can chickpeas or mixed beans, drained and rinsed well
½ cup finely chopped capsicum
½ cup diced cucumber
2 spring onions

Simple dressing:

1-2 Tbsp olive oil
Juice of ½ lemon

Method:

1. Prepare couscous and allow to cool.
2. Combine couscous, chickpeas or mixed beans and vegetables in a large bowl.
3. Toss through dressing just before serving.

Serve alongside chicken, fish, or eggs.

Use for leftovers for lunch the next day – keeps well in the fridge for 2-3 days.

SMALL STEPS, BIG BENEFITS: EXERCISE FOR KIDNEY HEALTH

*Written by Vanessa Kipa
Kidney Society Wellness Educator*



Exercise can feel really intimidating when you're living with kidney disease and/or on dialysis. You might worry about getting tired too quickly, losing your balance, weakness, or simply not having enough energy to get through the day. The good news is that moving your body doesn't have to be overwhelming or exhausting to make a difference. When done safely and regularly, even gentle movement can help improve your strength, energy, mood, and overall wellbeing.

Wellness isn't about running marathons or spending hours at the gym. Even the gentlest movements can make a big difference. Short walks around the house, stretches while sitting in a chair, or simple strength exercises can all help with circulation, joint mobility, and even your mood.

And it's not just "formal" exercise that matters. Everyday things — climbing stairs slowly, carrying groceries, or practising balance while brushing your teeth — all add up. The key is to celebrate these small steps. Progress isn't always about intensity. What might feel tiny to someone else can actually be a huge achievement for you. Doing a little consistently, in ways that feel manageable, is far better than pushing too hard and risking exhaustion or injury.

On "good days," it's tempting to push yourself. But with kidney disease and dialysis, energy levels can change from day to day. One day, a short walk or gentle stretches might feel great; the next, even light activity could feel like a challenge.

That's why consistency is more important than intensity. Short, regular sessions — tailored to how you feel that day — are far more effective than occasional bursts of heavy exercise. Listen to your body, pace yourself, and build habits you can maintain. Over time, these small, steady efforts add up, improving your strength, stamina, and confidence.

It's normal to worry about falling or injuring yourself, especially if you have balance issues, neuropathy, or fatigue. That's why safety is the foundation of any exercise plan. Start with movements that feel comfortable, use stable surfaces, and adjust as needed. Personalised guidance ensures your exercises are safe and achievable. As your confidence grows, it becomes easier to stick to a routine that supports both your physical and mental wellbeing.

Exercise isn't about pushing through discomfort. Fatigue, pain, or dizziness are your body's signals — not reasons to feel guilty. Adjust your intensity, rest when you need it, and celebrate every bit of progress, no matter how small.

Exercise for kidney health isn't one-size-fits-all. It's about finding what works for you, building confidence, and creating routines that fit your life. Even small, consistent steps can improve your strength, energy, and overall wellbeing. The most important step? Start where you are, move safely, and remember that every step counts.

If you'd like help with your exercise, please contact Vanessa at vanessa@kidneysociety.org.nz or check out our [YouTube channel here: www.youtube.com/@kidneysocietyadks](https://www.youtube.com/@kidneysocietyadks)

Running for granddad: Charlotte's 2026km challenge

In 2026, Charlotte Abbott is taking on an extraordinary challenge — running 2,026 kilometres in one year to raise funds and awareness for kidney health.



For Charlotte, this journey is about far more than a personal achievement. "It's about standing for something bigger than myself," she says. **"I wanted to do this for my Grandad."**

Charlotte's grandad, Graeme, lived with chronic kidney disease for six years before passing away earlier this year.



"Watching him navigate this journey, while still showing up for family milestones and supporting our achievements, has had a huge impact on me."

Charlotte says her grandad's resilience, alongside the unwavering support of her granny, Jenny, showed her just how deeply kidney disease affects not only the individual, but the entire whānau.

That experience became the driving force behind Charlotte's fundraising mission. As she trains and clocks up kilometre after kilometre, Charlotte is sharing her story publicly — sparking conversations about kidney disease and shining a light on the physical, emotional and financial toll it can place on families.

"I've come to realise just how vital support services are for people going through this," she says. **"No one should feel lost or alone on this journey."**

Supporting The Kidney Society, she explains, is her way of honouring her grandparents and helping other families facing similar challenges.

"The Kidney Society works to make sure people and their whānau have access to information, care and support when they need it most," Charlotte says. "Even small contributions can help ease the physical, emotional, and financial burden, and remind families that they're not facing this journey alone."

Through every stride she takes in 2026, Charlotte is carrying her grandad's legacy forward.

Follow Charlotte's journey on Instagram @char.active. And if you're able to, you can also support her challenge by donating using the link below or scanning the QR code:
givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/2026km-in-2026



We are so grateful to Charlotte, and because of supporters like her, more families across Aotearoa can face kidney disease with connection, care and confidence. **Thank you, Charlotte!**

Using more than one medicine to protect the kidneys



Doctors now know that using a combination of medicines is often the best way to slow down chronic kidney disease (CKD) and reduce the risk of heart problems. This applies to people with diabetes and without diabetes.

Over the last few years, several types of medicines have been shown to help protect the kidneys and the heart. These include:

- Blood-pressure medicines that protect the kidneys (often called ACE inhibitors or ARBs)
- SGLT2 inhibitors (originally diabetes medicines, but now known to help the kidneys even if you don't have diabetes)
- GLP-1 medicines (used for diabetes and weight control, and also good for heart and kidney health)
- Mineralocorticoid receptor blockers (newer versions that reduce kidney scarring and inflammation)

Because these medicines work in different ways, doctors are increasingly using more than one at the same time. This is becoming the usual, or “standard”, way of treating CKD.

Why more than one medicine is often needed

CKD is complicated. Kidney damage doesn't happen for just one reason — it involves:

- High pressure inside the kidney filters
- Inflammation and scarring
- Problems with blood sugar and metabolism
- Hormone systems that affect blood pressure and fluid balance.

With thanks to insights and research sourced from:

https://academic.oup.com/ndt/article/40/Supplement_1/i59/8002192

Most medicines only fix one part of the problem, so on their own they can only slow kidney damage a little. Using several medicines together gives stronger and more lasting protection. For example:

- Some medicines reduce the pressure inside the kidney's filtering units
- Others reduce inflammation and scarring
- Some help control blood sugar and weight

Medicines can also help each other

In some cases, one medicine can actually make another safer or easier to tolerate.

For example, SGLT2 inhibitors can reduce high potassium levels and fluid retention (swelling). This can make it safer to stay on other important kidney-protecting medicines.

What this means for you

CKD is best managed with a team approach of medicines, each doing a different job to protect the kidneys and the heart. If you have CKD, it's normal for your treatment plan to change over time as new evidence emerges and as your needs change.

Next time you're speaking with your GP, here are a few questions that might be worth asking them

- What stage is my kidney disease, and what does that mean for me?
- Which medicines am I on that protect my kidneys?
- Are there any kidney-protective medicines I'm not on yet?
- What benefits should I expect from these medicines?
- What side effects should I watch out for?
- How often do I need blood tests to monitor my kidneys?
- How does my diabetes, blood pressure, or heart health affect my kidneys?

Join the thousands of Kiwis now managing their kidney disease confidently.

Get started by booking a free 15-minute appointment.

Scan QR code to book a call



Whether you've recently been diagnosed or have been living with kidney disease for some time, it can be hard to know where to start when it comes to getting support.

That's why we've introduced a new option for you - a free 15-minute call with one of our Health Educators, and we've already had some fantastic feedback about it:

"A big thank you to Jack. He was very helpful in giving me information about the society and what it can do for people with kidney disease. Already your website has provided me with recipes we can use - my wife is very grateful, as am I."

Here is your chance to have a friendly chat, ask questions, and be guided toward the support that's right for you.

Scan the QR code above, or head to our website to book a free call:
kidneysociety.org.nz



**INTRODUCING KIDNEY CONNECT:
A PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR
THOSE LIVING WITH KIDNEY DISEASE**

Learn About Kidney Connect

Scan the QR code or head to the link
below to get more information

kidneysociety.org.nz/kidney-connect



Our new Kidney Connect programme offers one-to-one peer support, connecting people affected by kidney disease with volunteers who have lived experience of kidney disease, donation, or transplantation.

What are the benefits of this programme?

- One-to-one peer support.
- Shared experience & understanding.
- Phone, online, or in-person connection.

The programme is open to people living with kidney disease, kidney donors and recipients, as well as their whānau, carers, and supporters - with connections tailored to what suits you best.

**Discover more about Kidney Connect by scanning the QR code above or head to our website:
kidneysociety.org.nz/kidney-connect**

Diabetes & your kidneys: What you need to know...

ON-DEMAND SESSION

Virtual education session



Kidney damage can have many causes, but diabetes is one of the most common. That's why understanding your risks, managing your health, and getting regular checks is so important. Join us for an informative session designed for people living with kidney disease and their whānau.

Whether you've just been diagnosed, have been living with kidney disease for a while, or supporting someone you care about - this session will be full of useful information for you.

In this interactive session, you'll learn:

- What diabetes is, and what blood tests like HbA1c really mean.
- How diabetes can damage the kidneys over time.
- How to feel more confident managing your diabetes.
- Key treatment and lifestyle strategies that protect kidney function.

Access this session at a time that suits you, from wherever you are.

Simply scan the QR code or click the link to access the session.



**ACCESS
ON-DEMAND
SESSION**

Brand new content:

Foodie Friday

To kick off the year, we were excited to launch something brand new on our social channels — Kidney #FoodieFridays!

Every Friday, we share kidney-friendly recipes, simple nutrition tips, and easy food swaps to help you enjoy food while living with kidney disease.

You may have already spotted some of our delicious dishes and handy hints — from portion-smart meals to ways to add more plant-based proteins and beyond.

Follow along each week for fresh ideas, flavour-packed inspiration, and practical tips you can use at home, on our social media channels >



<https://www.facebook.com/kidneysocietyadks>



<https://www.instagram.com/thekidneysociety/>

Giving Back, One Step at a Time

Last year, Kurt Kelsall signed up for his first organised running event in more than 20 years. It wasn't just about getting back into running. It was also about giving back.



A few years earlier, an old friend from school had shared something deeply personal on Facebook. His wife had **developed severe kidney disease** following an infection. It progressed quickly. Suddenly, they were navigating dialysis while raising two young children.

His friend wasn't able to donate due to medical reasons, and they were searching for other potential donors.

Kurt had always considered himself fortunate in life.

"I have been fortunate in many aspects of my life. Successful, perhaps. I believe that many people have contributed to that. It is important to me that I also contribute to others in turn."

Offering a kidney felt like one way to do that.

After donating, Kurt became more aware of his own health and what it would mean to look after it long term.

He began making lifestyle changes — improving his diet, increasing his activity. About two years later, he realised he needed something tangible to aim for, so he set himself a goal: enter an organised running event.

When he signed up, he noticed there was an option to fundraise.



Photo credit: Sportograf

"I thought that having a public goal, with visible donations, would help hold me accountable. I can often get very invested in something, only to abandon it quickly."

There were many worthwhile charities listed. But **when he saw The Kidney Society, the choice felt simple.**

His recent experience had changed his understanding of kidney disease. While he had always known we live in a country with a public health system, he now understood more clearly where its limitations lie — particularly when it comes to long-term conditions like chronic kidney disease.

"The reality of what patients need to just survive has only recently come into sharp relief"

For Kurt, the wrap-around services provided by organisations like The Kidney Society are essential. As demand increases and public health systems strain, that additional support can make all the difference for families trying to navigate daily life with kidney disease.

It comes back to something simple: contributing in return, and through donation, running, and fundraising, that's exactly what Kurt continues to do.

We are incredibly grateful to Kurt for his extraordinary generosity — not only for donating a kidney, but for continuing to raise awareness and support for a disease that is so often overlooked.

Kurt is taking on the Auckland Half Marathon later this year and continuing to raise funds for The Kidney Society. If you'd like to support his efforts, please [click here to donate or scan the QR code.](#)



SHAPE

THE SUPPORT WE PROVIDE



Supporting people affected by kidney health is at the heart of everything we do. To help us do this better, we are inviting you to complete a short survey.

Your feedback will help us understand:

- How you connect with us.
- What support matters most to you.
- How we can improve and grow in the future.

The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

We know your time is valuable, and we truly appreciate you taking a few minutes to share your thoughts. Your voice matters to us, and your answers will directly help shape our work. Your answers are confidential. You will not be identified in any reporting.

We're not government-funded, which means we rely on the generosity of people like you to keep our services free and to reach more families as kidney disease continues to rise. That's why your feedback is so important to us - it helps shape what we do and how we support our community.

As a thank you, everyone who completes the survey can choose to go in the draw to win a gift basket of sponsored goodies.

Thank you again for your support and for being part of the kidney community.

Check your inbox to see your survey invitation or scan the QR code below to complete survey.

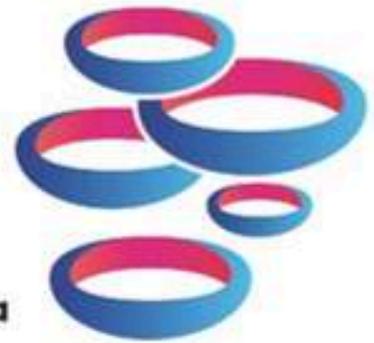




VASCULITIS
FOUNDATION.

22nd International **Vasculitis Workshop Community & Patient Conference**

21 February 2026 • Melbourne, Australia



Join us for a **free** one-day event for patients and care partners. Learn from world-leading experts about managing vasculitis, chronic fatigue and future treatments. Participate in breakout sessions like nutrition, exercise, medications, vaccines, and advocacy. Don't miss this opportunity for learning, connection, and community!

**Saturday,
February 21
08:00 - 16:00**

**FREE
Registration
(Lunch included)**

**1 Convention
Centre Place,
South Wharf 3006**

Scan the QR code to register or visit: vasculitis-melbourne2026.com



Supported by:



For more information: jakullman@vasculitisfoundation.org

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

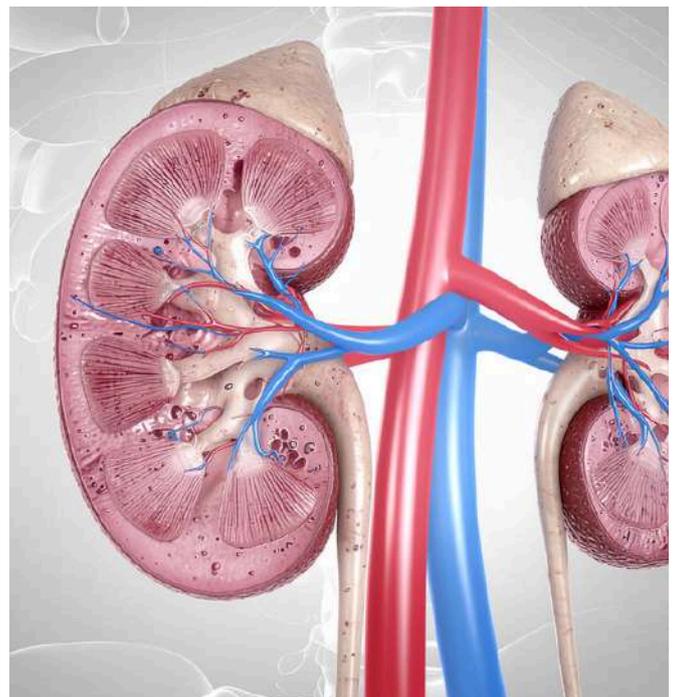
FAQ – What are kidneys and what do they do?



You have two kidneys that are incredible organs that work quietly in the background to keep you healthy. Their main job is to filter and clean your blood. Your kidneys are full of tiny blood vessels and this is where all the filtering and cleaning happens. So, think of them a bit like a coffee filter, they filter the good stuff from the waste. All the good stuff your body reabsorbs and the waste, toxins and extra water, your kidneys filter leave your body as urine. This helps keep your body clean and balanced.

Your kidneys also play a vital role in:

- Controlling your blood pressure.
- Helping your body make red blood cells.
- Keeping your bones strong and healthy.
- Balancing important minerals, like sodium and potassium.
- Maintaining the right level of acidity in your blood.



FAQ – What is Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)?



Chronic Kidney Disease is when the tiny blood vessels in your kidneys become damaged and they can no longer continue to fully filter all the good stuff from the waste. This damage happens over time and this gradual loss of kidney function, happening over months or years, is called Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD).

Two of the main causes of CKD in New Zealand are diabetes and high blood pressure. Continued high blood sugars over time from diabetes or continued high blood pressure is a bit like having sandpaper in your blood vessels. Over time, they can cause damage, including to the tiny blood vessels in your kidneys. When this happens, our kidney's filtering system doesn't work as well. So instead of excreting the waste products from our body in our urine, some of them can build up in our body.

CKD often develops slowly and may not cause noticeable symptoms at first. Sometimes, you can lose up to 90% of your kidney function before you notice any symptoms of kidney disease.

Unfortunately, it is very common and around 1 in 10 adults has some level of kidney damage. If not managed well, CKD can lead to kidney failure (which requires dialysis or a kidney transplant), heart disease and stroke as well as electrolyte and fluid imbalances.

Early detection, good medical care, and healthy lifestyle choices can make a real difference in slowing the progression of CKD.

If you have any questions about your kidneys or chronic kidney disease, give us a call on 0800 235 711 or book a call with one of our Health Educators [here](#), or scan the QR code below.



HOW DO WE FUND OUR WORK?



For over 45 years, the Kidney Society has stood alongside people living with kidney disease, offering support, resources, and care, free of charge, thanks to the incredible generosity of individuals, organisations, and community groups.

MEMBERSHIP

Becoming a member of the Kidney Society is a meaningful way to show your support. Members receive regular updates, invitations to events, and opportunities to be more involved in our work. The \$20 annual Membership fees also help fund the free services we provide to people living with kidney disease.

DONATIONS

Every donation—big or small—makes a tangible difference.

Types of donations and how they help:

- **Regular Giving:** Monthly donations provide us with reliable funding, helping us plan ahead and maintain essential services year-round. This is one of the most effective ways to support our ongoing work.
- **Major Donations:** Larger, one-time contributions from donors who are in a position to give significantly can have a transformational impact on our programs and services.
- **Bequests:** A gift left in your Will can create a lasting legacy. Bequests help ensure we can continue providing support to people with kidney disease for generations to come.

GRANTS

We actively seek funding through grants, which play a crucial role in sustaining the free services we offer. These grants allow us to reach more people and keep our programmes running strong.

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

From special events to grassroots initiatives, fundraising is an essential part of our income. We welcome support from individuals, families, and community groups who want to help make a difference.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

We're proud to partner with businesses that are committed to giving back. Whether through donations, sponsorship, or collaborative fundraising, corporate support helps us extend our impact and reach more people.

Please visit our website for more information about all the ways you can support us: www.kidneysociety.org.nz

“At the Kidney Society, we could not do what we do for those living with kidney disease, without the financial support of our donors. It’s only in partnership together that we can help those with kidney disease live their best life possible.”

- Kath, CEO Kidney Society

Itching: It's not just a minor nuisance.



For many people with kidney disease, itching is far more than a small irritation. Some patients itch constantly, while others may have months of relief before it returns. For a few, the urge to scratch becomes overwhelming – people have described rubbing themselves raw against rough walls or even rolling on the floor in desperation.

When itching is severe and relentless, it can take a real toll on mental health and may contribute to low mood or depression. It can also be socially uncomfortable: constantly wriggling or rubbing against the back of a chair to get some relief can feel embarrassing, except, perhaps, in a dialysis unit, where it is an all-too-familiar sight.

Why is the itch so hard to relieve?

This is not usually an itch you can simply scratch away. Many patients describe it as coming from under the skin rather than on the surface. Those affected often also have very dry, cracked or scaly skin, especially on the legs, arms, back and trunk.

Frequent scratching can damage the skin, leading to inflammation, pain and sometimes infection, which can make the problem even worse.

What can you do about it?

There is good news and frustrating news. The good news is that there are things you can try. The frustrating news is that research has not yet found a single treatment that works long-term for everyone, and the exact cause of kidney disease-related itching is still not fully understood.

Creams, gels, antihistamines and sometimes sedatives can make itching more bearable. Ultraviolet light treatment helps some people. But the first and most important stop is always your dialysis unit.

Itching may be linked to high phosphate or calcium levels, and adjusting your diet or medications can sometimes bring significant relief. Because itching can worsen when you are hot, some patients find that slightly lowering the temperature on their dialysis machine helps but always check with your dialysis staff before making any changes.

If medical treatments don't solve the problem, many people turn to a mix of self-care and tried-and-tested tips from other patients. Often, it's about finding the right combination that works for you.

Scratching – but carefully

One patient's advice is simple: "The only thing to do is scratch it!" He uses a length of rope, about a metre long, holding an end in each hand and pulling it back and forth across his back. Different directions and pressures can be used – and it even counts as exercise. This works best on bare skin.

Other options include:

- A long-handled bath brush to gently remove dead skin cells, especially on the back, arms and legs
- A natural fibre loofah or loofah glove (available from supermarkets & pharmacies)
- A wooden or bamboo back scratcher
- A rough towel

Some people even rub their back against a door frame or rough plastered wall. If you do scratch, be gentle. Avoid breaking the skin and always follow up with a cream or oil to soothe and protect it.

Soothing the skin

Many patients find relief from one or more of the following:

- Using Pinetarsol gel or a similar product instead of soap in the shower, or Pinetarsol liquid in the bath
- Aloe Vera or Neutrogena soap (used with hands, not a flannel – one bar can last about a month)
- A bath with lavender oil, or ordinary salt added to the water
- Applying EgoDerm Cream or a similar non-oily cream at night before bed
- Thymol Antiseptic Powder from the chemist
- Aloe Vera gel gently massaged into the skin

People have also tried a wide range of creams, lotions and oils with varying success, including Nivea, baby oil, Alpha Keri, calamine lotion, zinc cream – and even Deep Heat. What works can be very individual.

Other tips from patients

- Some people find hot packs soothing; others prefer cold packs
- During dialysis, a cold back wash with a little inexpensive cologne or aftershave added can help
- Wear cotton or other natural fibres, especially while dialysing – avoid synthetics
- Exercise daily to keep circulation going
- Aim for a balanced, high-fibre diet
- Get plenty of sleep
- Learn relaxation techniques and try to reduce stress

A note on EPO

There is some encouraging news for patients receiving EPO for anaemia: it appears that EPO may reduce dialysis-related itching. However, it's not realistic to expect EPO to be prescribed only to treat itching.

The cost of creams

Creams and gels can be expensive. It's worth shopping around – supermarkets may be cheaper than pharmacies. Your GP may also be able to prescribe products such as Pinetarsol occasionally, so don't be afraid to ask.

Dry skin and kidney disease

Healthy skin stays soft and flexible thanks to natural oils and perspiration. In kidney disease, the glands that produce these oils and sweat often become less active, leading to very dry skin. Dryness alone can cause irritation and can make itching much worse.

Looking after your skin, staying moisturised and working closely with your dialysis team can make a real difference. While itching may be common, you don't have to suffer in silence – support, ideas and relief are all worth seeking.



Want more tips? We've got a handy brochure packed with helpful info. Send us an email on contact@kidneysociety.org.nz and we'll send you a copy.

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:

April Magazine
Friday 10 April, 2026

Send your thoughts to contact@kidneysociety.org.nz

Have you joined our social media community yet?

If not, now's the perfect time to follow us!

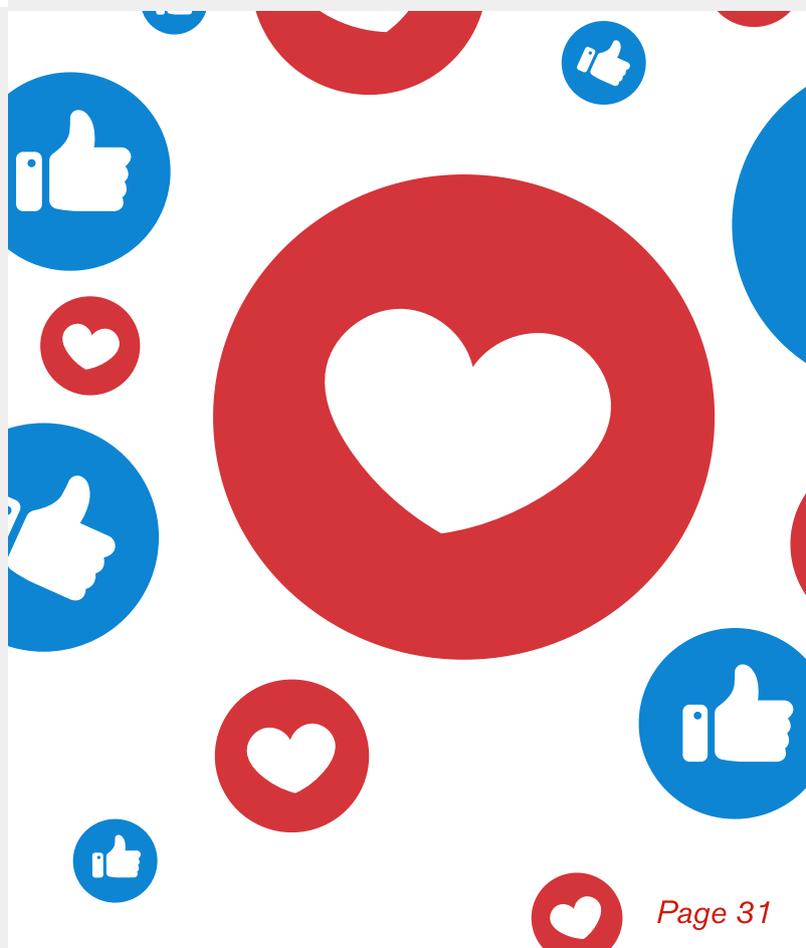
Across our channels, we share inspiring stories, what we've been up to, upcoming events, helpful information, and resources for people living with kidney disease and their whānau.

It's also a space for real conversations — where we can connect, listen, and keep working together to make a positive difference.

👉 Follow us here

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/kidneysocietyadks

Instagram:
<https://www.instagram.com/thekidneysociety>



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.

**Trust Waikato - \$8,000
Pub Charity - \$60,000
D V Bryant Trust - \$3,500
Frimley Foundation - \$5,000
Ted & Mollie Carr Endowment Trust - \$20,000**

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:

***Chris Money
Joan Boyd***

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.