



The
Kidney
Society

News

Issue No: 249 August/ September/ October 2026

***Supporting your journey to better kidney health
every step of the way.***



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.



Kirsty: Social Worker

Kirsty is our health social worker and helps make some of life's challenges a little easier. Whether it's support with WINZ, housing, connecting with other community services, or simply having a listening ear, she's here to advocate for our people, offer support, and help you find the right pathway forward.



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).



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

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



Nathaniel: Maintenance Technician

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

THE KIDNEY SOCIETY: WHO, WHAT, WHERE.



ADMIN AND OPERATIONS TEAM



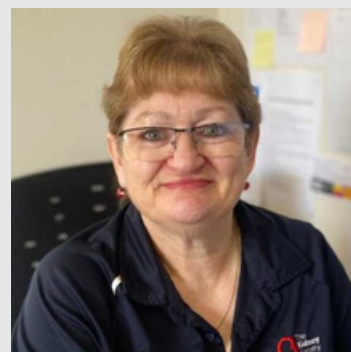
Joanne: Development Manager

Joanne leads our fundraising initiatives and partnerships, helping us grow our reach and impact across Aotearoa. She manages our donor care, Legacy Programme (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

120a Great South Road,
Papatoetoe 2025

PO Box 97026, Manukau City,
Auckland 2241

Office hours

Monday to Friday
9am – 5pm

Kia ora from Kath

As we settle into the heart of winter, I hope you're finding ways to keep warm, look after yourself, and stay connected with the people who matter most. This time of year can bring its own challenges, especially when you're living with kidney disease, but it can also remind us of the importance of community and the strength we find in supporting one another.

Every issue of our magazine is a reflection of that community. It's a chance to share practical information, celebrate the people who make a difference, and remind each other that none of us walks this journey alone.

In these pages you'll find plenty of helpful advice to support everyday life, from answers to common questions about travel insurance and understanding what support you may be entitled to, to practical tips from the Northland renal dietitian team on keeping your mind sharp while living with kidney disease. There are also ideas for staying active and looking after your wellbeing through the colder months, along with opportunities to connect through our upcoming events, the August Shake the Salt session, peer support, and even the Auckland Marathon if you're looking for a way to get involved.

We're also pleased to share an update from the RSA Conference 2026, where new ideas and conversations continue to shape the future of kidney care. Alongside our latest research round-up, it's encouraging to see the progress being made and the commitment of so many people working towards better outcomes for our community.



Two pieces in this issue stand out in a special way. Jean Thompson's story, *A Life Shared, A Legacy Continued*, is a moving reminder of the love, resilience and generosity that exist within our kidney community. Stories like Jean's help us see ourselves in one another and remind us why the work of the Kidney Society matters so much.

You'll also find an opportunity to help shape the future of treatment for IgA Nephropathy. If this is relevant to you or someone you know, I encourage you to take a few moments to read about how you can have your voice heard. The experiences of people living with kidney disease and their families are incredibly valuable. By sharing those experiences, you help guide the future of care for everyone.

As always, this magazine is only one part of what the Kidney Society is here to do. Whether you're newly diagnosed, supporting a loved one, living with kidney disease for many years, or simply looking for information and connection, we're here to walk alongside you. Thank you for being part of our community, for supporting one another, and for helping make the Kidney Society a place where people feel understood, informed and encouraged.

I hope you enjoy this issue, find something that speaks to you, and know that whatever stage of the journey you're on, you are not alone.

Stay warm, stay well, and we'll see you soon.

Ngā manaakitanga,
Kath

Kidney Society Events



27

Thursday
27th August
2026

Virtual Education Session: Shake the Salt

7pm to 8pm

Simple ways to reduce sodium & support your kidney health

Online – join from your home or wherever suits you.

11

Friday
11th September
2026

Rotorua Advanced Kidney Care Session

10am to 2pm

**St Davids Presbyterian Church
Cnr Wharenui & Reeve Road
Owhata, Rotorua**

For more information about the event or if you'd like to attend, please contact Jack at Jack@kidneysociety.org.nz.

29

Tuesday
29th September
2026

Counties Pre Dialysis day session

**Logan Campbell Building, Auckland
Botanical Gardens
102 Hill Road Manurewa, Auckland**

For more information about the event or if you'd like to attend, please contact Nogi Taviliniu-Eiao, mobile 021890762, email Nogi.Eiao@middlemore.co.nz

29

Thursday
29th October
2026

Tairāwhiti Advanced Kidney Care Session

10am to 2pm

**Waikanae Surf Lifesaving Club
280E Grey Street, Awapuni, Gisborne
4010**

For more information about the event or if you'd like to attend, please contact Jack at Jack@kidneysociety.org.nz.

Connecting the Kidney Care Continuum

National Renal Clinical Network mahi in Aotearoa New Zealand

Dr Leanne Te Karu

Co-Lead · Renal National Clinical Network

Conference 2026 · Diversity in Action: Every Voice, Every Patient
Christchurch · 17–19 June 2026 · Closing keynote

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

RSA Conference 2026: Inspiring New Directions in Kidney Care

The **Renal Society of Australasia (RSA) Conference 2026** brought together kidney health professionals from across Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific to explore the latest research, practical innovations and ideas shaping the future of renal care. Held at Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre, this year's conference embraced the theme "**Diversity in Action: Every Voice, Every Patient**," highlighting that great kidney care is about more than treating disease—it is about understanding the person behind the diagnosis.

For those of us working alongside people living with chronic kidney disease every day, several key themes stood out.



THE POWER OF CONNECTION

Another inspiring presentation explored the impact of supportive peer groups for people living with CKD and those receiving dialysis.

Recognising that kidney disease can be isolating, particularly for Māori and people facing socioeconomic challenges, the programme brings together patients for regular community-based activities, education and social connection. Developed in partnership with renal clinicians, kaiāwhina, Green Prescription and community organisations, the initiative demonstrates that wellbeing extends far beyond medical treatment.

It was a powerful reminder that connecting with others who understand the kidney journey can be just as valuable as clinical care. Building confidence, sharing experiences and knowing you're not alone can make a real difference to health and wellbeing.

MOVEMENT IS MEDICINE

One of the standout sessions at this year's conference focused on something that sits at the heart of the Kidney Society's mission—helping people with kidney disease stay active and live well.

Professor Paul Bennett and Dr Brett Tarca from the Global Renal Exercise Network challenged clinicians to rethink exercise, shifting the conversation from what people with kidney disease can't do to what they can do. The session explored practical ways to support physical activity for people living with CKD, those receiving haemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis, and people preparing for kidney transplantation through prehabilitation.

The message was clear: movement should be considered a routine part of kidney care, not an optional extra. Even small increases in activity can improve strength, confidence, independence and quality of life.

For us, this was a proud moment. As the only organisation in Aotearoa providing a dedicated, free wellness education and exercise service specifically for people living with kidney disease, it was incredibly rewarding to see the international renal community reinforcing the importance of the work we do every day.

Our Wellness Educator is privileged to walk alongside clients at every stage of their kidney journey. Whether it's taking those first steps after diagnosis, building confidence before a transplant, staying active while on dialysis, or finding ways to move despite other health challenges, our goal is always the same—to help people feel stronger, healthier and more confident in living well with kidney disease.

The conference reinforced that exercise is no longer viewed as an "extra" in kidney care. Around the world, it is increasingly recognised as an essential part of improving health and quality of life. We're incredibly proud that the Kidney Society has been leading the way in this space for many years, providing a service that empowers people to make movement a natural and achievable part of everyday life.



LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE WAKA

One of the conference's most memorable keynote presentations was delivered by Māori navigator and leadership expert Hoturoa Barclay-Kerr. In his presentation, "Waka as a Symbol of Leadership in the 21st Century," Hoturoa drew on the principles of traditional Polynesian navigation to explore what great leadership looks like in today's world.

Using the waka as a powerful metaphor, he spoke about trust, communication, adaptability and the importance of everyone working together towards a shared destination. His stories of ocean voyaging highlighted that successful leadership isn't about one person steering the course—it's about recognising the strengths of every member of the crew and navigating challenges together.

The lessons resonated strongly with those working in kidney care. Supporting someone through chronic kidney disease is rarely a straightforward journey. It requires collaboration between health professionals, whānau and the individual, with everyone working together to achieve the best possible outcomes.



PUTTING PATIENTS AT THE CENTRE

Throughout the conference there was a consistent focus on improving the patient experience.

Presentations explored health literacy, culturally responsive care, supportive care, symptom management, nutrition education and ensuring information is meaningful and accessible. Researchers also shared work examining how better communication and education can improve confidence and self-management for people living with chronic kidney disease.

Rather than asking patients to fit into the health system, many presenters challenged healthcare professionals to adapt services to better meet the needs of the people and communities they serve.



The Heart of Care

CULTURE AND CONNECTION

Jase Te Patu

Renal Society of Australasia

Conference 2026

Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre

LOOKING AHEAD

The conference reinforced that kidney care continues to evolve. While advances in dialysis, transplantation and medical treatments remain important, equal attention is now being given to exercise, mental wellbeing, nutrition, peer support and empowering people to take an active role in managing their health.

For the Kidney Society, these discussions reaffirmed the importance of the work we do every day. Supporting people to move more, build confidence, stay connected and improve their overall wellbeing complements the medical care they receive and helps them live well with kidney disease.

The RSA Conference 2026 highlighted that the future of kidney care isn't just about treating disease—it's about helping people live the fullest life possible. It's a future built on collaboration, innovation and person-centred care, and one that we're proud to be contributing to here in Aotearoa New Zealand.





A Life Shared A Legacy Continued

The Kidney Society is deeply grateful to our financial supporters. Gifts, regular donations, and bequests make it possible for our work to continue serving New Zealanders and their families living with kidney disease.

Recently we spoke with Jean Thompson, one of our regular financial supporters, about her husband Brian's journey with kidney disease. Their story reflects the love, resilience, and support that carry families through difficult times.

Here is Brian and Jean Thompson's Story

Brian Thompson was many things — a husband, a father, a truck driver, and later, the manager of the family kiwifruit orchard, and eventually a grandfather.

He met Jean when they were young and attending their local Bible Class. They married and built a life together, welcoming two sons into their family. Later, they made the adventurous decision to move to Papua New Guinea with their young family, where Brian worked for a trucking business. Over the years it grew to 40 trucks. Eventually, they returned to New Zealand to take over the family kiwifruit orchard.

Jean always encouraged Brian to keep up with regular medical check-ups. During one routine appointment, their lives changed unexpectedly. Brian's doctor noticed his kidney function was declining. The diagnosis of kidney disease came as a shock.

A Waikato renal nurse helped Brian and Jean understand his kidney disease and the treatment options available to them. She also connected them with the Kidney Society.



That introduction led them to another Brian — a staff member at the Kidney Society who would become an important support for them both. "He was wonderful with my Brian," Jean remembers. "My Brian really appreciated having another man to talk with. I was grateful that Brian (KS) was honest and direct about the reality of kidney disease."

Jean stepped into the roles she would carry for years — partner, advocate, organiser, and caregiver. From the beginning, Jean put them on a low-sodium, low-potassium diet.

"It was just easier to do it with him," she says. With support from a renal dietitian, Jean even created a notebook of supermarket products and brands with lower sodium and potassium levels. "We found the Kidney Society magazine was very useful with recipe ideas," Jean says. "And we both enjoyed reading other people's kidney stories."

As Brian's kidney disease progressed, Brian from the Kidney Society would regularly visit and check in. "He'd come to see how we were doing and offer support," Jean says. During one of his visits, my Brian joked with him, "Well, at least it's a good thing I'm not dying of cancer." Brian (KS) gently replied, "That's true — but cancer can sometimes be cured." This was a sobering moment for my Brian.

Thanks to the dietary changes Jean helped put in place, Brian was able to delay dialysis for four years.

Then one day, his doctor said something neither of them expected: "If there's something on your bucket list, now is the time to do it."



Jean says they didn't hesitate. "We walked out of the doctor's office and went straight to a travel agent."

Brian had always dreamed of cruising along the Rhine River. By the time they left the travel agency that day, flights, hotels, and the cruise were all booked.



Two weeks later they were on their way. For Jean, it became one of their most precious memories together.

After returning home, they began a new chapter as Brian started dialysis. They both felt that peritoneal dialysis would best fit the life they still wanted to live together. It gave them freedom to travel around New Zealand, spend time with family, and continue making memories together.

Throughout that transition, they felt fully supported by both the renal team and the Kidney Society. Jean laughs as she remembers how much dialysis soon became part of their everyday life. "We used to joke that the dialysis machine was the third partner in our marriage."

Whenever they had questions, Brian from the Kidney Society was there. Whether it was a phone call or a visit a few times a year, they knew support was always close by. "Although there are many wonderful female renal nurses," Jean says, "my Brian appreciated having another man to talk with." She also appreciated that Brian (KS) was always honest with them. "He didn't sugar-coat things."

Later, Brian developed a peritoneal infection which caused serious complications. Medications and hospital treatment followed, but sadly his health continued to decline.

Looking back, Jean says their family will always be grateful that they shared one final Christmas together in December 2024.

After Christmas, Brian was referred to Waipuna Hospice, where he received supportive care and help managing his symptoms until his peaceful passing on 22 January 2025.

Brian and Jean shared 47 years together. They were partners in every sense of the word - in family, in adventure, in business, and through all life's challenges. "Brian was never difficult," Jean says. "Together we managed to get all our legal matters sorted. He made it easy for me."

Reflecting on their journey, Jean remains deeply grateful. "Brian and I felt so supported through his kidney journey. We are grateful for the care from his renal doctor, the wonderful care of the renal nurses, and the ongoing support from the Kidney Society. Combined with the care of family and friends, it allowed us to fully embrace the time we had together."

Jean smiles as she explains why she supports the Kidney Society. "I financially give to the Kidney Society because I can," she laughs. "But also to honour the memory of my Brian and the life we shared together."



Maintain Your Brain –

How to Boost Your Brain Power When You Have Kidney Disease



When we think about kidney disease, we usually think about how it affects the kidneys. But researchers are discovering that kidney health and brain health are actually closely linked.

People with kidney disease are more likely to experience frustrating problems with memory, concentration, and thinking as they get older.

Scientists are now learning that the kidneys, gut, and brain work together in ways we did not fully understand before. This connection is sometimes called the **gut-kidney-brain axis**.

Understanding this link may help people with kidney disease take steps to protect both their kidneys and their brains.

How are kidneys and the brain connected?

Healthy kidneys act like filters. They remove waste products and extra fluid from the blood. When kidney function declines, some waste products can build up in the body.

Researchers believe these waste products may contribute to inflammation and damage blood vessels. The kidneys and brain are both supplied by tiny blood vessels. Conditions that damage blood vessels, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, can harm both organs. This is one reason why people with kidney disease may have a higher risk of memory and thinking problems.

Food can help protect the brain

The encouraging news is that food choices can influence gut health, kidney health, and brain health all at the same time.

Studies suggest that diets rich in plant foods may help reduce inflammation and support healthy gut bacteria. Eating patterns such as the Mediterranean-style diet and DASH diet have been linked with better heart health, kidney health, and brain health.

These diets focus on:

- **Vegetables and fruit**
- **Whole grains**
- **Beans and lentils**
- **Nuts and seeds**
- **Fish and seafood**
- **Healthy fats such as olive oil**

They also encourage limiting highly processed foods, excess salt, and large amounts of red and processed meats.

For people with kidney disease, dietary advice should always be personalised. Some people need to limit certain foods because of potassium, phosphate, or other medical concerns. That is why it is important to discuss any major dietary changes with your kidney dietitian and healthcare team.

Don't forget about protein

Many people with chronic kidney disease or who have a kidney transplant hear about reducing protein intake, while people on dialysis often need more protein than usual.

Not eating enough protein or calories can lead to muscle loss, weakness, and poorer health outcomes. In older adults, poor nutrition may also contribute to problems with memory and thinking. The latest research highlights the importance of avoiding malnutrition.

The goal is to find the right balance of protein for your stage of kidney disease and your overall health – talk with your kidney dietitian to find out how much protein you should be eating.

Exercise helps the brain too

Physical activity does much more than strengthen muscles.

Research shows that **exercise may help reduce inflammation, improve blood flow to the brain, and support the growth of healthy brain cells.** Exercise also helps control blood pressure, blood sugar, and weight, all of which are important for protecting both kidney and brain health.

You do not need to become an athlete. Regular activities such as walking, gardening, swimming, cycling, or gentle strength training can all be beneficial.

Before starting a new exercise programme, talk with your healthcare team about what is safe for you.

Sleep matters

Sleep is another important part of brain health.

Scientists have discovered that the brain uses sleep to clear away waste products that build up during the day. Poor sleep may reduce this natural cleaning process.

Sleep problems are common in people with kidney disease. If you regularly struggle with sleep, snore heavily, or feel tired during the day, talk to your healthcare team.

Supplements?

The short answer is: **there is currently no supplement that has been proven to prevent cognitive decline in people with kidney disease,** and many supplements can be risky because impaired kidneys may not clear them effectively.

Although probiotics, fish oils, and other supplements are being studied, there is currently no supplement proven to prevent memory problems in people with kidney disease. The strongest evidence still supports healthy eating, regular exercise, good sleep, and careful management of kidney disease and cardiovascular risk factors.

If you suspect you might have nutrient deficiencies, talk with your kidney dietitian or healthcare team.



Practical tips for a healthier brain

Here are some simple ways to support your brain if you have kidney disease:

- ✓ Eat a variety of plant foods.
- ✓ Work with a kidney dietitian to make sure you are getting enough and the right nutrition.
- ✓ Stay physically active most days of the week.
- ✓ Manage blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol.
- ✓ Take medications as prescribed, especially phosphate binders.
- ✓ Aim for good-quality sleep.
- ✓ Stay socially connected with family and friends.
- ✓ Keep your mind active through reading, puzzles, hobbies, or learning new skills.

The Bottom Line

Researchers are still learning about the gut-kidney-brain connection, but one message is already clear: what is good for your kidneys is often good for your brain too.

Healthy eating, regular physical activity, good sleep, and careful management of kidney disease can all play a role in protecting memory and thinking as we age. Small daily choices may help support both kidney and brain health for years to come.

*Written by Northland Renal Dietitians. Information is a summary of the following article:
"Levassort, H. et al. (2026). Chronic Kidney Disease, Nutrition, and the Brain: How to Maintain Brain Health Through Nutrition in Chronic Kidney Disease, Journal of Renal Nutrition, Vol 36, No 3 (May), 2026: pp 353-364"*

Spanish-style fish stew

Recipe courtesy of New World

(<https://www.newworld.co.nz/recipes/fish/spanish-style-fish-stew>), adapted to suit the renal population.

Ingredients:

- 1 brown onion, sliced
- 1 red capsicum, sliced OR 1 grated carrot
- 1 tbsp paprika
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 tin chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 tin diced tomatoes
- ½ cup black olives (optional)
- 500g firm white fish (we used monkfish)
- Olive oil

Method:

1. Add a splash of olive oil to a large pan over medium heat. Add the onion and capsicum/carrot and sauté until onions are soft and the capsicum is lightly coloured or carrot has softened.
2. Add the paprika and garlic and sauté for a further 2 minutes.
3. Add the chickpeas, tomatoes, olives and a cup of water to the pan and leave to simmer for 15 minutes or until slightly thickened.
4. Cut the fish into 5cm chunks and nestle the pieces into the stew. Cover with a lid and leave to cook for 4-5 minutes, or until the fish is cooked through. Serve immediately.
5. Serve with your choice of greens (e.g., steamed broccoli or green beans) and toasted wholegrain bread.





CKD WARRIORS

RŌPŪ TAUTOKO AROPĀ RENAL



**Friday 11
September**



10am – 1pm



**The Life Church Otara,
201 Preston Road, Otara**

What is it?

A safe space where people share their lived experiences and stories on living with Kidney Disease.

Who is it for?

People living in the Counties Manukau Region living with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD).



**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR
WOULD LIKE TO RSVP,
PLEASE CONTACT BRENDA ON
021 801 259**

- This kaupapa kōrero is a new initiative offering the opportunity to hear real-life stories from people living with CKD.
- The purpose is to promote a supportive group environment, share lived experiences, have purposeful discussions, share different coping skills and ways that have helped others on their kidney journey.

WINTER DOESN'T HAVE TO SLOW YOU DOWN

Simple ways to stay active, strong and confident this winter

As the temperatures drop, it's easy to spend more time indoors and become less active. Cold mornings, shorter days, and wet weather can make getting outside feel like a challenge. But even during winter, keeping your body moving is one of the best things you can do for your overall health and wellbeing.

If you're living with chronic kidney disease (CKD), it means finding ways to move your body regularly in a way that feels safe and enjoyable for you.



Boost your energy levels



Help manage blood pressure



Maintain muscle strength



Improve your mood and reduce stress



Improve balance and reduce stress



Support your heart and circulation

Make everyday activities like climbing stairs, carrying groceries, or getting out of a chair easier. The key is to keep moving—even if it's only for a few minutes at a time.

Every movement counts

Exercise doesn't have to be complicated.

Everyday activities all contribute to a more active lifestyle.

Some simple ways to move more include:

- Going for a short walk around your neighbourhood or local shopping centre
- Standing up and stretching during TV ad breaks
- Walking while talking on the phone
- Doing light housework or gardening
- Playing with your grandchildren/pets
- Using resistance bands – exercises can be done watching TV

Remember, it all adds up. Staying active indoors

When the weather isn't on your side, there are still plenty of ways to keep moving from the comfort of home. **Try these simple exercises:**



Sit-to-stands from a sturdy chair



Heel raises while holding onto the kitchen bench



Gentle stretching to improve flexibility



Marching on the spot while the kettle boils

Start with just a few repetitions and gradually build up as you feel stronger.

MAKE WINTER WALKING ENJOYABLE

Walking is such an underrated form of exercise for everyone, including our CKD clients. **To make winter walks more comfortable:**



Dress in layers so you can adjust as you warm up



Choose the warmest part of the day if possible



Wear supportive footwear with good grip



If it's too wet or icy, consider walking indoors at a shopping mall or community centre.

Even a 5-10 minute walk can make a positive difference.

Listen to your body

Some days you'll have more energy than others—and that's okay.

Aim to:

- Start slowly.
- Take breaks when you need them.
- Build up gradually.
- Stop if you feel dizzy, unwell, or experience chest pain, and seek medical advice if symptoms persist.

The goal isn't to push through discomfort—it's to create a routine you can maintain.

You don't have to do it all at once. A few extra steps, a short walk to your letterbox, or a couple of simple exercises at home can make a real difference over time.

Because when it comes to your health, every movement counts.

EVERY STEP MAKES A DIFFERENCE



On 1 November 2026, thousands of people will take to the streets for the Barfoot & Thompson Auckland Marathon. Among them will be members of our Kidney Society community, each with their own reason for taking part but all united by one goal: making life better for people living with kidney disease and their whānau.

Every kilometre completed and every dollar raised will help ensure people across Aotearoa can continue to access the free support, education and wellness services they need. Behind each fundraising page is a personal story of connection, compassion and a desire to make a difference.

For Charlotte Abbott, that motivation began close to home. Watching her grandad, Graeme, live with chronic kidney disease gave her a first-hand understanding of how kidney disease affects not only the individual but their entire whānau. Inspired by his journey, Charlotte set herself an extraordinary challenge for 2026: to run 2,026 kilometres during the year while raising awareness and funds for The Kidney Society. Her commitment is a powerful reminder that meaningful change often begins with one person's decision to turn care and concern into action.

Kurt Kelsall's story comes from a different perspective. As a kidney donor, he has seen the impact of kidney disease in a deeply personal way. After donating a kidney, Kurt gained a greater appreciation of the challenges many people and families face every day. Looking after his own health has become an important part of his journey, and this November he will complete the Auckland Half Marathon while raising funds for The Kidney Society. His generosity did not end with his donation. He continues to give back by helping ensure others affected by kidney disease have access to the support they need.



Joining Charlotte and Kurt on the start line will be members of The Kidney Society's own team, including Chief Executive Kath Eastwood and Chairperson Chantelle Good. Alongside other supporters, they are lacing up their running shoes to raise funds that will directly support the free wrap-around services our organisation provides every day.

For our team, the marathon is an opportunity to stand alongside the people we support. Every training run and every step on race day represents our commitment to ensuring no one has to face kidney disease alone. The funds raised will help us continue walking alongside individuals and whānau through every stage of their kidney journey.

While every participant has their own reason for running, they all share a common purpose: helping people living with kidney disease feel supported, informed and connected.

You can be part of that effort too.

Whether you register to join our Auckland Marathon team, make a donation, or simply share these fundraising campaigns with your own friends, whānau and community, your support helps make a real difference.



"Together, every step, every donation and every conversation helps ensure people living with kidney disease and their whānau continue to receive the support they need. Thank you for helping us make every step count."

If you would like to support Charlotte's 2,026 km in 2026 challenge, visit:

<https://givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/2026km-in-2026>

To support Kurt Kelsall and the Kidney Society team, including Kath & Chantelle, visit:

<https://aucklandmarathon26.grassrootz.com/kidney-society>

Shake the Salt Habit



Simple ways to reduce sodium and support your kidney health



VIRTUAL SESSION!

Are you living with kidney disease, recently diagnosed, on dialysis, living with a transplant, or supporting a family member or friend?

Join us for a free, practical online session to learn how sodium affects your kidneys and discover simple, realistic ways to reduce your intake, without sacrificing flavour.

What you'll learn:

- How too much sodium impacts your kidneys and overall health
- Where sodium hides in everyday foods
- How to decipher food labels and spot high-sodium products
- Practical tips to reduce your sodium intake while still enjoying tasty, satisfying meals
- Simple flavour-boosting alternatives to salt that the whole family can enjoy

Presented by a dietitian who gets it, this session is packed with practical advice, easy food swaps, and realistic strategies to help you make informed choices that support your kidney health. There'll also be plenty of opportunity to ask questions in a friendly and supportive environment.

Thursday 27th August

7:00PM - 8:00PM

Online

Join from wherever suits you!



**REGISTER
NOW**

LEARN WITH US, WHEREVER YOU ARE

We offer free online education sessions every month for people living with chronic kidney disease (CKD) and their whānau.

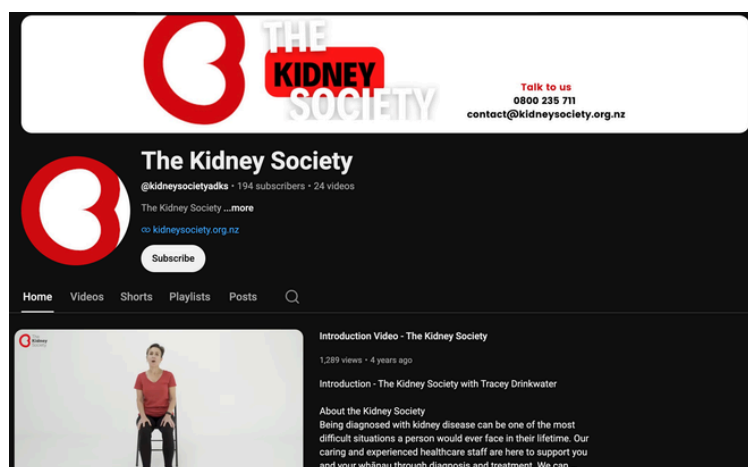
These sessions provide clear, practical information to help you better understand your kidney health, explore treatment options, and feel more confident making decisions about your care.

They're designed for people in Aotearoa New Zealand, with opportunities to ask questions and access helpful resources.



Missed a session?

Most of our education sessions have been recorded, so you can watch them whenever it suits you.



<https://www.youtube.com/@kidneysocietyadks>

**Visit our YouTube channel,
@kidneysocietyadks, to
watch previous education
sessions and learn at your
own pace:**

Do you have IgAN?

Join a Clinical Trial



Age 18-60



DIAGNOSED with
IgA Nephropathy (IgAN)



Confirmed by kidney
biopsy within the
LAST 5 YEARS



**TAKING STABLE
DOSES** of an ACE
inhibitor or angiotensin
receptor blocker

REGISTER

New Zealand Clinical Research (NZCR) is New Zealand's **leading clinical trials and medical research organisation**, with over 25 years of research experience and a track record of completing over 800 trials involving over 17,000 New Zealanders.

By taking part in clinical research, you could help contribute to the development of potential future treatments for people living with IgAN

Register your interest today to find out more, or share with someone who may be a good candidate.

Find out more: *Study Information: Juniper-2 - NZCR New Zealand Clinical Research*

Clinical trials involve an investigational drug and some study assessments.

Kidney Research Round-up:

Four Studies That Could Make a Difference



Research into kidney disease is moving forward all the time. While not every study changes medical care overnight, each one adds to what we know about keeping people healthier for longer.

This edition looks at four recent pieces of research that could affect the way kidney disease, diabetes and heart health are managed. Some of these findings may lead to changes in everyday care, while others offer promising new options that are still being discussed by kidney specialists. Here's what the research found, and what it could mean for you.

Earlier diagnosis of diabetes may help protect kidney health

Diabetes is one of the leading causes of kidney disease, so finding it early is important. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the blood test used to diagnose diabetes, called HbA1c, now has updated cut-off points. HbA1c measures your average blood sugar level over the previous two to three months.

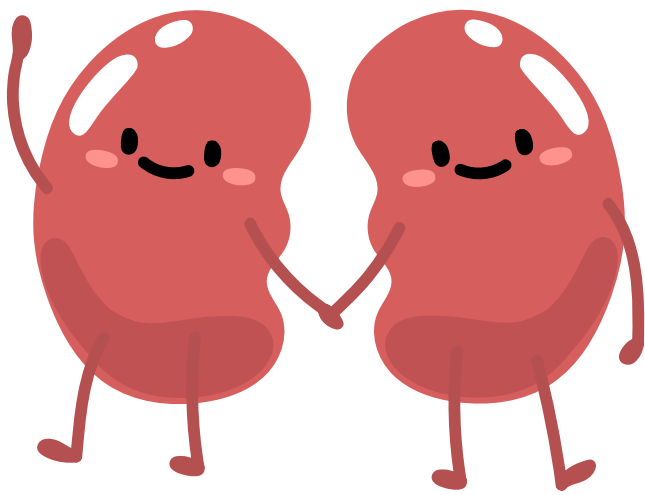
The new guidelines lower the HbA1c level needed to diagnose diabetes. This means some people may now be diagnosed earlier than they would have been under the previous system. The changes also bring New Zealand into line with international recommendations.

The updated guidance recommends that people newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes begin treatment promptly. This includes healthy lifestyle changes, diabetes education and, for most people, starting the medicine metformin.

For people who already have kidney disease or heart disease, newer medicines called SGLT2 inhibitors and GLP-1 receptor agonists are now recommended regardless of their HbA1c level, unless there is a medical reason not to use them. These medicines have been shown to help protect both the kidneys and the heart.

What this means for you

If you have diabetes, or are at risk of developing it, you may notice your healthcare team discussing these new HbA1c targets at your next routine appointment. Earlier diagnosis gives people a better opportunity to control blood sugar and reduce the risk of complications, including damage to the kidneys.



Looking beyond BMI when assessing health risks

For many years, doctors have used Body Mass Index (BMI) as a simple way to estimate whether someone is underweight, a healthy weight or overweight. BMI compares weight with height, but it does not show where body fat is carried.

Researchers have now found that combining body fat percentage with a person's waist measurement gives a much clearer picture of their risk of developing conditions such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and chronic kidney disease than BMI alone.

This supports a growing view that carrying excess fat around the waist is more closely linked with health problems than weight alone.

What this means for you

A tape measure may become just as important as the scales. Measuring waist size is simple, inexpensive and can provide useful information about future health risks. BMI still has a role, but this research suggests it should no longer be the only measurement used when assessing a person's risk of developing kidney or heart disease.

Reference: eBioMedicine 2026;128:106272

Lowering blood pressure continues to protect the heart in people with kidney disease

High blood pressure is common in people with chronic kidney disease and increases the risk of heart attack, stroke and other heart problems.

Researchers combined information from 46 clinical trials involving more than 285,000 people to see whether lowering blood pressure remained helpful across different stages of kidney disease.

The results were reassuring. Every small reduction in blood pressure lowered the risk of major cardiovascular events, regardless of how advanced a person's kidney disease was. The benefits were seen even in people whose blood pressure was already relatively low. The only group that appeared to receive a slightly smaller benefit was people who had both chronic kidney disease and diabetes.

What this means for you

Keeping blood pressure well controlled remains one of the most important ways to protect your heart if you have kidney disease. This study reinforces the value of taking prescribed blood pressure medicines regularly and working with your healthcare team to reach your individual blood pressure target.

Reference: Lancet. 2026;407(10539):1626–38

Fish oil shows promising results for people on haemodialysis

Heart disease is the leading cause of illness and death in people receiving haemodialysis. Until now, very few treatments have clearly reduced this risk.

A large international clinical trial found that people receiving maintenance haemodialysis who took a daily fish-oil supplement containing omega-3 fatty acids experienced significantly fewer serious cardiovascular events than those taking a placebo. Importantly, there was no meaningful increase in side effects, including bleeding, which has been a concern with fish-oil supplements. The study followed participants for around three and a half years.

One important point is that not all fish-oil supplements are made to the same standard. Omega-3 fatty acids can

become damaged during manufacturing through a process called oxidation, which may reduce their potential benefits.

What this means for you

These findings are encouraging and may lead to more discussions about fish-oil supplements in dialysis clinics. However, fish oil is not suitable for everyone, and different products vary in quality. If you receive haemodialysis and are interested in taking a supplement, talk with your renal dietitian before starting one. They can advise whether it is appropriate for you and help you choose a high-quality product.

Reference: N Engl J Med. 2026;394(2):128–37

Looking ahead

Although these four studies focus on different aspects of care, they share a common message. Earlier diagnosis, better ways of assessing health risks, careful management of blood pressure and new treatment options all have the potential to improve long-term health for people living with kidney disease.

Research continues to shape the care people receive. While not every new finding leads to an immediate change in treatment, each study brings us closer to more personalised, effective care and better outcomes for people living with kidney disease.

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I find out what I'm entitled to?

x

There are a range of support options available in New Zealand for people who need additional assistance. Most have specific eligibility criteria, so it's worth checking what you may qualify for. You can check your entitlements at <https://www.check.msd.govt.nz>.

Main benefits you may be entitled to: NZ Superannuation, Jobseeker support, the Supported Living Payment, Emergency Benefit or Sole Parent Benefit

Supplementary assistance support you may be entitled to: Accommodation Supplement; Disability Allowance to help cover ongoing medical costs such as prescriptions, other medical supplies, GP visits, travel to appointments, additional power for dialysis, and St Johns alarm/membership; Temporary Additional Support to help with ongoing essential costs; Special Needs Grant to help pay for an essential or emergency cost

Housing support packages are also available for people who would like to access rental accommodation in the private rental sector.

If you would like help checking whether you are receiving the correct entitlements, need assistance completing forms, would like someone to advocate on your behalf, need support letters written, or require any other social support, please call us on 0800 235 711 or book a call with our Social Worker [here](#).

What is Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)?

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What are the early signs of kidney disease?

+

Can kidney damage be reversed?

+

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do you have any travel insurance recommendations?

x

Before booking your trip, ask your nephrologist or GP to confirm that you are medically fit to travel. When comparing travel insurance, check with the insurer whether your transplant or kidney condition will be treated as a pre-existing condition, as this can affect what is covered and whether any additional assessment or premium applies. Taking the time to confirm these details before you travel can help avoid unexpected issues if you need to make a claim.



What is Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)?

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What are the early signs of kidney disease?

+

Can kidney damage be reversed?

+

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](#)

KIDNEY SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

For a small annual membership fee, you'll be helping us continue to provide free support services, education and programmes for people living with kidney disease and their whānau.



As a member, you'll enjoy a range of benefits, including:

- Supporting a cause that makes a real difference in the lives of people living with kidney disease.
- Helping keep our services free for those who need them most.
- Voting rights at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in November, giving you a voice in the future direction and governance of the Society.
- Regular updates on the Society's work, impact, events and opportunities to get involved.

**BECOME A MEMBER TODAY
and help us make a lasting
difference**

**Membership is open to all for
an annual fee:**

\$20.00 inc GST.

Every membership strengthens our community and helps ensure we can continue supporting people through every stage of their kidney health journey.

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

CREDIT/DEBIT CARD

You can pay using your debit or credit card via our website - Your paragraph text.

Simply select \$20 in the donation form and add "Membership" in the 'In memory' field.

ONLINE BANKING

You can pay your membership fee directly to the *Auckland District Kidney Society's* bank account number:

Account name: Auckland District Kidney Society

Account number: 12-3032-0705009-00

Please add your name and word 'Membership' in reference field.

You are also welcome to add a donation if you so choose.

Your commitment to the Kidney Society is truly appreciated and we thank you once more for your valued support.

Thank You Aotearoa

Good things happen when a community gets behind one another. From donated materials and delivery networks to handmade blankets, comfortable dialysis chairs and local fundraising opportunities, we're incredibly grateful for the people and organisations who help make practical support possible for people living with kidney disease and their whānau. Here are just a few of the supporters we'd love to celebrate.



MARLEY NEW ZEALAND



From pipe to foot rollers — and a little more comfort

For nearly 10 years, Marley New Zealand has supplied the pipe we use to make foot rollers for our Wellness Programme. Hundreds of metres of donated pipe are cut, sanded and turned into one of our most popular wellness tools that help clients manage cramps, restless legs and circulation.

A SIMPLE MATERIAL. A PRACTICAL TOOL. A REAL DIFFERENCE.

"What starts as a length of pipe becomes something our clients can use to feel more comfortable in their everyday lives."

KEEPING SUPPORT MOVING ACROSS AOTEAROA

Over the past year, NZ Couriers has helped us get more than 360 new client packs and 180 wellness packs into the hands of people who need them. Their nationwide delivery network helps ensure that useful information, practical resources and a message of support can reach people wherever home might be.

BECAUSE STAYING CONNECTED MATTERS.

"Every pack delivered is another person or whānau connected to support."



BACKING THE WORK THAT MATTERS TO OUR COMMUNITY

We were delighted to be selected as a Downer Donate recipient. A special thank you to Nix Smith, whose support helped make this opportunity possible. We're grateful to Downer for recognising the value of community organisations like the Kidney Society and giving us the chance to share our work.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING PUT OUR COMMUNITY ON THE MAP.

GOOD IN THE HOOD Z STADIUM HAMILTON



LOCAL SUPPORT CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

A big thank you to Z Stadium Hamilton for backing the Kidney Society through Good in the Hood. From 18 August to 14 September, customers can use their voting token to support local community groups, including the Kidney Society. Every vote can help us continue providing free support, education and practical services to people living with kidney disease and their whānau. Hamilton, we'd love your vote!

"When local people get behind local causes, the whole community benefits."

Making long dialysis days more comfortable

For someone spending up to six hours on dialysis, comfort matters. Thanks to generous funding from Lions and Rotary, our community dialysis houses have new recliner chairs to help make those long treatment sessions more comfortable. Our dialysis houses offer a more flexible, home-like option for people who want to receive treatment closer to their whānau and community.

A comfortable chair might seem like a small thing. For someone in treatment, it can mean a lot. Small changes to the treatment environment can make a long day feel a little easier.



Lions Clubs New Zealand
Kia Manaaki | We Serve



JEANETTE, JOAN & OUR VOLUNTEERS

Warmth one stitch at a time



Some of the most meaningful gifts are handmade. Our wonderful knitters, including Jeanette and Joan, create garments, blankets and rugs for our clients. For people receiving dialysis, who can often feel the cold during treatment, these thoughtful creations bring welcome warmth and comfort. But there's something else wrapped up in every stitch: the knowledge that someone cares.

"More than wool and stitches, these are gifts of time, kindness and care."

TO EVERYONE WHO STANDS WITH US — THANK YOU.

Whether you donated pipe, delivered a pack, picked up knitting needles, helped fund a recliner or simply chose to support our work in your community, you've helped make a difference to someone living with kidney disease. **We're grateful to have you alongside us.**

Ngā mihi nui, thank you for being part of our community.



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.

**The Trusts Your West Support Fund - \$10,000
JM Thompson Charitable Trust - \$35,000
The Lion Foundation - \$22,500
Robert Horton Memorial Trust - \$7,500
Esme & Tom Tombleson Charitable Trust - \$5,000**

We acknowledge, and are grateful for, the generous support received from all of the organisations listed above.

In Memoriam Donations have been received in memory of:

Don Asbey-Palmer

David Bell

Yuk Chan

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 number: 12-3032-0705009-00

Auckland District Kidney Society

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

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