

# Help Break Some Common Misconceptions

## MYTH # 1 DIALYSIS MUST PRECEDE TRANSPLANT

Actually, people who receive a kidney transplant before going on dialysis do better than patients who went on dialysis before transplant! Both patient and kidney transplant survival are better when patients undergo pre-emptive transplantation (meaning transplant before needing dialysis).

## MYTH # 2 TRANSPLANT IS A LAST RESORT

Transplant should be the first choice, whenever possible. As mentioned above, people do better if they were not on dialysis. In general, the healthier someone is, the better they do after transplant.

## MYTH #3 ONLY A CLOSE RELATIVE CAN DONATE

Just about anyone can donate a kidney to someone in need of a transplant, as long as the donor is medically able to donate. With the medications available today, the genetic match of the transplant isn't as important as it used to be. In fact, even if you have a willing but incompatible donor, you could enter a registry to "swap" donors with other incompatible pairs.

## MYTH #4 LIVING KIDNEY DONATION IS A NEW FIELD

The first successful living kidney donation occurred back in 1954—more than half a century ago! Living donation has a great track record and surgical innovations have improved the experience of living kidney donors tremendously!

## MYTH #5 LIVING DONORS FACE A LONG RECOVERY

With the availability of today's minimally invasive surgical procedures for living kidney donors, the majority of donors are in the hospital for just 1 to 2 days, and are recovered enough to return to work within about 3 weeks after donation!

To learn more about how you can become a Kidney Champion for someone needing a transplant, please visit our website at:

[www.cornellsurgery.org/transplantchampion](http://www.cornellsurgery.org/transplantchampion)

There you will find several tools to help you be a great Champion, including:


- \* This educational brochure
- \* A sample letter/email
- \* Information about starting a Cause on Facebook
- \* A sample event invitation

Feel free to contact us directly at:  
[livingdonorkidneycenter@med.cornell.edu](mailto:livingdonorkidneycenter@med.cornell.edu)  
for more information!

Get  
Involved.



 NewYork-Presbyterian  
 Weill Cornell Medical Center

Living Donor Kidney Center



# Be a Kidney Champion

Educate People About  
Living Kidney Donation

 NewYork-Presbyterian  
 Weill Cornell Medical Center  
Living Donor Kidney Center

*It isn't easy for a person with kidney failure to ask others if they are willing to consider being a kidney donor.*

**For people who need a kidney transplant, asking friends, co-workers, community members and even family members to consider donating their kidney can be a daunting task.**

**We encourage these patients to identify a "Kidney Champion", someone who is willing to educate others about the patient's condition and about transplant options so that the patient does not have to feel awkward.**

## *How You Can Help*

### **SEND A LETTER OR AN EMAIL**

Tell people about the plight of your family member/friend/significant other through a letter or email. Educate them about the available options for kidney failure, and explain why you chose to become a Kidney Champion. Visit our website for some ideas that you can easily customize and use to make this process easier.

### **HOST A GATHERING**

Set up a gathering at the patient's home, at church, or at a community center and invite people to come learn about kidney disease and the treatment options available to people with kidney failure. Tell the story of your loved one/friend/co-worker so attendees can better understand what living with kidney disease means. You can also invite a healthcare provider such as a nurse, social worker, or doctor to attend and speak with the group. Please contact us if you would like us to assist you in finding someone to speak to your group.

### **CREATE A FACEBOOK PAGE OR WEBPAGE**

The internet can be a great tool for spreading the word about kidney disease and the impact it is having on your loved one. For example, you can create a "Cause" on Facebook to educate people, gather support, and even raise funds! Feel free to link to our website in order to guide your audience to the educational material and tools we have available.

### **WHO MAKES A GOOD KIDNEY CHAMPION?**

Anyone can be a Kidney Champion for someone who needs a kidney transplant. Often times, a Kidney Champion is someone who already donated or received a kidney, someone who wanted to donate a kidney but was ruled out because of their own medical or psychosocial issues, or even children who are too young to donate themselves but want to help in some way.

### **WHAT DOES A KIDNEY CHAMPION DO?**

A Kidney Champion lets people in their circle know that their family member/friend/acquaintance has kidney failure and then provides education/educational materials about kidney disease, treatment options (dialysis or transplant) and living kidney donation.

**IN 2005, LESS THAN 2.5%  
OF PATIENTS UNDERWENT A LIVING  
DONOR KIDNEY TRANSPLANT BEFORE  
NEEDING DIALYSIS** USRDS 2007 Annual Report

*However, it is well known  
that having a kidney  
transplant **BEFORE** going  
on dialysis leads to better  
outcomes for the patient!*

