

ESRD Patient News[©]

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Spring has sprung. We have moved our clocks forward one hour. The daylight is now nearly 12 hours and the daffodils and hyacinths are blooming. Spring brings thoughts of new life, new beginnings and renewal. In this issue we are looking at some of those traditions of spring and how they help us to be well – mentally, emotionally and physically.

We also want to remind everyone about National Donate Life Month. If you are looking to have a transplant, we have links to information on what to expect. If you are considering donating, we also have links to help you understand the process and how to get started.

As always, we will remind you of ways to maintain your health so that you can live your best life on dialysis.

Also, don't forget to [check our website regularly](#) for updates on initiatives and programs being implemented as well as research and updates that can have a direct impact on your health as you continue moving forward to live your best quality of life.

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ESRD Patient News[©] a publication of The Carlisle-Williams Foundation, Inc., informs our readers of issues important to management and understanding of their disease and furthers the Foundation's mission of providing hope and support to ESRD patients. We welcome and encourage feedback.

"Contact Us" on the website. Thank you!

Spring Cleaning and Wellbeing

A [recent article](#) addressed the benefits of spring cleaning as it impacts overall wellbeing. While some may dread the ritual, others look

forward to the cleansing effect it has on the mind.

Following are 7 benefits of spring cleaning to overall wellbeing – physical, mental and emotional.

I. You feel accomplished

Spring cleaning is a kind of ritualized behavior, our own act of starting over just like the renewal of spring. When a task is accomplished, our brains feel good, which reduces tension.

According to Dr. Potter, “cleaning produces a tangible result that we can both see and feel.” It gives us the satisfaction of doing something meaningful.”

2. It destresses you

When you are feeling overwhelmed or even stuck, some people find cleaning to be a soothing way to work out their stress. Cleaning can restore a sense of control.

3. You feel more peace of mind

“Having a clean and organized home means you know where everything is, which can help you feel in control,” Dr. Potter explains.

4. It improves your focus

This can be especially important if you already have trouble focusing, as the distraction of clutter can be worse if you are already struggling to keep focused.

5. Safety

When your floor is clean and uncluttered, you're less likely to trip and fall over stray objects. Safety becomes even more important when dealing with medical issues as you don't want to compound problems.

6. It gets you moving

Cleaning can actually get endorphins pumping. While not a substitute for exercise, it's still good for your body to be up and moving around, and walking back and forth as you put things away can also help you hit your daily step goal.

7. It helps fend off depression

A 2010 study shows that people who describe their homes as “cluttered” or full of unfinished projects were more likely to suffer

from depression and fatigue than those who describe their homes as “restful” and “restorative.”

The benefits of spring cleaning are clear. It can boost your mood providing a sense of control and order; create a more calming, safe and peaceful environment at home; improve mental clarity; promote a sense of self-nurturing; and enhance mindfulness.

The Joy of Decluttering

Continuing with our spring theme and the concept of renewal and spring cleaning, did you now that having too much stuff and not having it organized impacts stress levels and mental health.

Numerous studies have found that the impact of clutter can contribute to anxiety and depression and help undermine healthy habits. Here are some tips to help you declutter.

1. Get rid of anything that doesn't add value

Ask yourself: “How might my life be better with less?” This can help you understand why you want to downsize, which is highly individual.

“Understanding the why behind simplifying gives us the leverage we need to begin to let go and helps us understand what is excess,” Fields Millburn explains.

2. Get rid of just-in-case items

There are probably lots of items you're storing “just-in-case” you need them somewhere down the road in some situation. These are items that can usually be replaced for less than \$20 and in less than 20 minutes. The exceptions to this would be things like first aid kits and true emergency items, which you should keep on hand.

3. Get rid of printed photos and paper

Give yourself permission to get rid of duplicate, similar or blurry photos, coupons or mailers you aren't using, bills and statements you can get online, old newspapers and magazines, and things you've ripped out of a magazine. Also consider digitizing your photos – libraries often offer equipment to do this yourself free. It allows you to keep the pictures and view them when you want but without all the clutter.

4. Get rid of actual trash

Empty your wastebaskets, shred piles of papers you've been meaning to shred and get rid of the junk mail piling up on your kitchen counter. A paper shredder is really a good investment and relatively inexpensive.

5. Get rid of damaged items

Holding on to a favorite mug that's chipped or a necklace that's fallen apart? Time to let go. If it's damaged, it probably has little or no use and could even be dangerous if you try to use it. This is also true for things that are missing parts like plastic containers with no lids.

6. Get rid of extras/duplicates

This often falls in the "just-in-case" category. Maybe it was a good sale, or you believe you should own more of an item. Determine how much is enough. This group includes coffee cups, measuring cups and spoons, wooden spoons, wire whisks, handbags, sunglasses, wine glasses, flatware, pens, markers, crayons and pencils.

7. Get rid of stuff you never use

Let's be honest. We all have those things that might have been "all the rage" and yet you know that you will never use any of that stuff. This often includes random spices and sauces,

uncomfortable shoes, empty frames and containers, books you've already read or never plan on reading, junk drawer items (or the whole drawer), knickknacks, freebies or gifts you were given but don't like.

8. Get rid of that abandoned hobby

Be realistic about which hobbies you've moved on from, and toss the related materials you're not using. Whether it was a knitting/crocheting hobby, or decoupage, or sewing/quilting or even baking. If you have moved on, get rid of the items needed for that hobby.

9. Get rid of items from a past phase

If you don't have a dog anymore and don't plan on getting a new one, give yourself permission to get rid of the dog bed, bowl and leash. And if you're retired, pack up the majority of your professional clothes and office supplies.

10. Get rid of anything expired

For your own safety and wellbeing, get rid of expired stuff including medication, food and makeup. Wearing bad makeup can lead to pink eye, inflammation that can lead to redness, bumps, a rash or even blisters and swelling. Properly dispose of expired medications (police stations often have a place to do this) and toss out old food including staples like flour, cornmeal and rice for your safety as well.

11. Get rid of things that bring up bad memories

If an item doesn't make you feel good, send it on its way. If you choose to donate or sell the items contact your local Big Brothers/Big Sisters or other charitable organizations that will take the goods.

12. Get rid of clothes that don't fit

I know we all do it. Well, one day I might lose or gain the weight and those are so cute. Resist the urge and keep items in your closet you look forward to wearing right now, not what you might wear someday.

13. Digital clutter

Digital clutter can build up and can cost money if you are paying for subscriptions you no longer use. Unsubscribe to podcasts you don't listen to. Unsubscribe from email subscriptions you aren't using and from people on social media you don't want to follow anymore. Delete apps that drain your time and energy, and social media platforms you no longer care about. Also close out email addresses you no longer use and unsubscribe from any auto-pay subscription you no longer need.

Decluttering isn't just for show — it could improve your health.

Signs of Chronic Kidney Disease

If you're on dialysis, you are probably familiar with the signs of chronic kidney disease. However, it is good to be reminded in case your family members or friends start to show symptoms.

1. Puffy eyes.

If your eyes are consistently swollen, especially in the morning, take note. This has been linked with kidney and heart disease. Because puffy eyes are linked with many other conditions, kidney disease and heart disease are often overlooked.

2. High blood pressure.

High blood pressure (hypertension) is a leading cause of heart attacks, strokes and

chronic kidney disease. Controlling high blood pressure by losing excess weight, exercising, not smoking, cutting back on salt intake and taking high blood pressure medications reduces the risk of these complications. Even borderline high blood pressure, or pre-hypertension, should be taken seriously, as it can inflict kidney damage.

3. Swelling around your extremities.

The kidneys filter wastes from the blood and remove excess water from the body via urine. When the kidneys aren't doing their job, this fluid can stay in the system instead of being excreted. Swelling around the hands, feet, and ankles may be associated with kidney or heart failure and shouldn't be dismissed.

4. Protein or blood in the urine.

Urinalysis or urine testing is used to look for abnormalities such as an excess amount of protein, blood, pus, bacteria or sugar. A urine test can help to detect a variety of kidney and urinary tract disorders, including chronic kidney disease, diabetes, bladder infections and kidney stones. A trace of one type of protein, albumin in urine (albuminuria) is an early sign of chronic kidney disease. Persistent amounts of albumin and other proteins in the urine (proteinuria) indicate kidney damage. The presence of albumin is also a risk factor for cardiovascular events and death.

5. High cholesterol.

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance found in your blood. Too much cholesterol can build up in your blood vessels, narrowing vessels and leading to a blockage. When a blockage occurs in your heart vessels, it is called coronary heart disease and can cause a heart attack. In people with chronic kidney disease (CKD), heart disease is very common. It is suggested that people with CKD have cholesterol labs drawn at least yearly. Your doctor may want to do them more frequently if something has changed with your health.

Mindfulness Training can Promote Healthy Choices

An eating plan called the DASH diet can lead to heart-healthy changes, like lower blood pressure. The diet encourages eating fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and avoiding saturated fats. But despite its known benefits, many people have trouble sticking to this eating plan. A new study tested whether mindfulness training might help people follow the DASH diet.

Mindfulness is a focus on the present moment. It makes you more aware of what's going on inside and around you. The training program taught people mindfulness skills. These include yoga, meditation, and self-awareness. It also stressed taking other steps to lower blood pressure. Such steps include increasing physical activity and taking blood pressure medicines.

The study enrolled about 200 volunteers with high blood pressure. Half received usual medical care. The rest received mindfulness training. They were asked to perform mindfulness practices at home for at least 45 minutes a day, six days a week. They also attended weekly classes and other group training.

After six months, people in the mindfulness group had a significant drop in blood pressure compared to the other group. The mindfulness group also followed the DASH diet more closely. And they had greater awareness of their body's signals, like hunger cues.

"The program gives participants the tools to make heart-healthy diet changes that can lower their blood pressure and decrease their risk of cardiovascular disease," says study leader Dr. Eric B. Loucks at Brown University. The researchers are now testing different adjustments to the training program.

<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2024/02/mindfulness-training-can-promote-healthy-choices>

April Is National Donate Life Month



April is Donate Life Month.

More than 103,000 people are on the national transplant waiting list, and 17 of them will die today for lack of an organ. Help save lives. Join this national campaign to encourage people to register to become organ donors. Sign up at organdonor.gov.

Living Donation: Live to See What Your Gift Can Do

You may be surprised that many healthy adults can donate a kidney or a piece of their liver with minimal risk to themselves, while helping save the life of another person.

While most organ donors are deceased, some people can donate their organs while they are alive and well. Anyone considering living donation should understand the benefits, risks, and other considerations.



Benefits of Living Donation

- Recipients of organs from living donors have even better health outcomes than those saved by deceased donors.
- As a living donor, you can choose who receives your organ – or you can donate to someone you don't know who's in need.
- You can reduce someone's wait time for a kidney or liver.

Outcomes for Living Donors

- Most living donors go on to live healthy and active lives.
- Kidney donors typically stay 2 to 3 days in the hospital; liver donors can expect about a 5-day stay.
- Donors resume normal activities after donation recovery, which takes about 6 to 12 weeks (kidney) to 8 to 12 weeks (liver). Donors can live life as usual without special limitations or medications.
- Most donors report living donation as a positive emotional experience; they get to live to see the positive impact of their donation. And they tend to have similar or better quality of life than before the donation.

Did You Know?

People have two kidneys, but one is enough to keep a normal, healthy body going strong.

When a donor gives part of their liver, the part they keep and the part they donate both regrow to full size.



Considerations

- Living donation is typically safe for the donor, but with surgery comes some medical risks, such as complications like pain or infection.
- Donors do not pay for medical costs because the recipient's insurance typically covers expenses. However, donors may face costs like lost wages, travel costs, or paying for child care. The good news is that there are financial assistance programs to help cover these costs.
- Recovery from surgery takes time, and donors may have to take off work and abstain from activities for a while.

Who are living donors?

Everyday people like you. All it takes is a generous heart to help someone in need of a kidney or liver to live a longer life.

"I had two kidneys. I gave away one...one healthy kidney...I did what I wanted to do and what I had to do as a husband," says Cesar. The kidney donor from Florida saved the life of his wife, Monica, with his living donation. Today, the former Marine is back to rowing every day and taking vacations with Monica.



The body's remarkable ability to adapt makes giving while living possible.
Learn more about living donation at organdonor.gov.

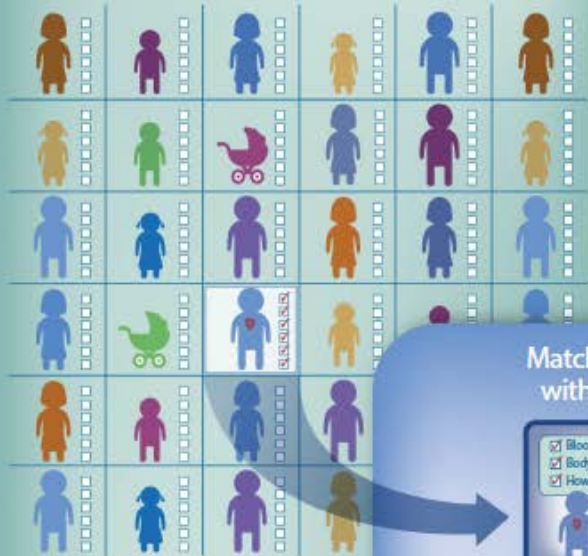


When someone needs a transplant:

The process begins when someone's organ starts to fail, and he or she will need a transplant to survive. A thorough evaluation is made at a transplant center.



A person who passes the evaluation will be put on the national transplant waiting list, and the wait for a matching donor organ begins.



The waiting list is very long. Not everyone will receive an organ in time, and an average of 21 people on the list die each day. That's why it's so important to register.

How someone becomes a donor:

Most organs for transplants come from deceased donors. Here's how that happens. A person comes to the hospital with a life-threatening brain injury, such as from an accident, a stroke, or lack of oxygen. The person is put on artificial support.



The doctors work hard to save the patient's life. But sometimes, nothing can be done. There's a complete loss of brain function. The patient is declared clinically and legally dead. Only then is donation an option.

The hospital contacts the organ procurement organization (OPO), which checks the donor registry. If the person is registered, the OPO will inform the family. If not, the family will be asked to authorize donation.



That's when donation can turn a time of loss into a time of hope. Because machines have kept blood containing oxygen flowing to the organs, they can be passed along.

Matching a donor with a recipient



A national system matches people on the waiting list with donors. Many factors are taken into consideration.



But some things are NEVER considered. Organs are never matched based on someone's race, gender, how much money they make or how famous they are.

Transforming a life:



Once a match is found, the patients are contacted by their transplant team... a call that could mean a second chance at life.



The organs are recovered from the donor, and sent to the hospitals where surgeons perform the lifesaving transplants.



It will take healthy living and medications to keep the organ working well in its new home.



You can choose to pass along life too. Any age is the right age. And any day is the right day to sign up.

To learn more and sign up, go to organdonor.gov.

If you are interested in receiving a transplant, visit <https://transplantliving.org> to learn more.