

WHAT'S HAPPENING

A newsletter for the Maine Medical Center family

Maine Medical Center Promotes Living Donor Awareness

This April marks the 11th annual National Donate Life Month, a celebration commemorating those who have given the gift of life through organ and tissue donation.

This year's celebration at MMC is educating the public about living kidney donors. Kidneys from living donors, once transplanted, last about 10 – 15 years longer than kidneys from deceased donors. Living kidney donations can also be scheduled and coordinated to fit the needs of everyone involved.

There is always enormous gratitude and appreciation for deceased donors, their families, and their caregivers, but there are not enough organs to fill the need, so the Maine Transplant Program is helping to support education about living donors.

"There are almost a hundred people on the waiting list in Maine right now," says Wendy Osgood, VP of Adult Medicine Services. "Every donated kidney means one less person on dialysis and one more life saved."

The testing process for donors is extensive, but the donation itself is quick and there is no cost to the donor. A transplant team supports the donor from beginning to end.

A key member of that team is Roxanne Taylor, R.N., MSN. Roxanne is the living donor coordinator for MMC and the first point of contact for interested donors. Roxanne helps those interested decide if donating is right for them, and educates them about the process.

Roxanne says the best way she can help people who want to donate, but have concerns or questions, is to connect them with a previous donor. She tries to find someone in a similar age and situation. "To talk to someone who's been through the process is the best reference," she says.

Hallie Twomey donated a kidney last December. She did it in memory of her father, who received a heart transplant years ago, and her son, who took his own life. Now she volunteers to speak on behalf of the New England Organ Board about donation.



Members of the MMC transplant team and the New England Organ Bank (NEOB) planted 4,500 blue and yellow flags in the Courtyard to represent people waiting for transplants in New England. Pictured (l-r): Janet Wight, NEOB, Bethany McGrail, NEOB, Deb Jackson, SCU, Mary Biggar, Pre-transplant Coordinator, John Macone, NEOB, Laura Huckestein, NEOB, Haromi Dolliver, Deb Hoch, DNP, CCRN, ACNP-BC

"This is the one thing in the last four years since my son died that has left me feeling whole," says Hallie. "Knowing I did this has brought me some peace."

Hallie says the process was easy and recovery even easier.

"The transplant clinic and staff were really supportive and made me feel like not just a number, but they were there for me. It's not scary."

Once someone decides they want to donate, the evaluation process begins. A medical history is taken and there are three issues that will immediately rule out a potential donor:

- High Blood Pressure
- Diabetes
- History of multiple kidney stones

If a patient passes this initial evaluation, blood is drawn to see if they're a match (if they are donating to a spe-

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Facebook Kudos

See what visitors are saying about us on Facebook ...

"It is nice to know we have such wonderful doctors here in Maine, you all should be proud of your accomplishments."

"I just wished I hadn't waited so long to get my hip replacement. Thanks again, Dr. Babikian, now I can walk without a limp."

"I want to thank you for the wonderful care that I received for diagnosis and treatment of my appendicitis. The nurses and health care providers were so caring and kind and gave such good and professional care to me."

"Thanks for all you do. Barbara Bush [hospital] is beyond amazing!"

"Living Donor Awareness" from front

cific recipient), and blood and urine tests are done to evaluate their kidney function.

If these results are all good, then the potential donor comes to meet with the entire transplant team, including a social worker, dietitian, financial counselor, transplant nephrologist, and surgeon. Usually that same day, the donor will have a CAT scan, EKG, and chest x-ray to complete the evaluation.

When this process is complete, the donor picks the surgery date, and the donation and transplant are both scheduled for that day.

The kidney is usually outside the body for about 15

minutes, but it can be on ice for transportation, if necessary, for up to 36 hours. The sooner the kidney is transplanted, the better.

The surgery itself takes approximately three-and-a-half to four hours. The donor usually stays in the hospital for two days after surgery.

Three months after her donation, Hallie is feeling great. She says very little has changed in her life since donation. She is supposed to drink more water and she has some small scarring on her abdomen. Physically she says "nothing is different." She was fatigued after the surgery, but was able to get up and around, and was back at work after a few weeks.

Hallie advises those inter-

ested in donating, "Be prepared, do your research, and know you may be rejected. Make the decision – it's admirable, you can't control what comes from that."

Last year there were 18 organ donors at MMC. Many lives were saved and the patients' and families' wishes were honored.

"The transplant waiting list is made up of people of all ages," says Laura Huckestein RN, BSN, Donation Coordinator for the New England Organ Bank. "It's important to show that people of any age can make a powerful difference in someone's life by being a donor."

If you are interested in donating, contact Roxanne Taylor, 662-7185.

COMING UP AT MMC

Treating Interstitial Cystitis with Diet
Thursday, April 24
6 - 7 p.m.
100 Brickhill Ave
2nd Floor Conference Room

Employee Appreciation Week
Monday, April 28 -
Friday May 2
See the MMC Intranet for complete schedule.

Joann Groff Perioperative Symposium
Saturday, May 3
7 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Dana Center

Maine Children's Cancer Program Day at the Sea Dogs
Sunday, May 18
For tickets call:
662-2739

For details on all upcoming event, check out the Calendar on the MMC Intranet.



Maine Medical Center
MaineHealth

WHAT'S HAPPENING IS PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING DEPARTMENT

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