

## Turkey time: Keeping your cholesterol under control during the holiday



The Thanksgiving holiday is the perfect excuse to stuff ourselves with delicious, fatty foods and second helpings. Individuals who suffer from renal insufficiency and post-transplant patients need to be wary of overindulgence in the foods of this season. These foods can heighten cholesterol levels and compromise your overall health.

Cholesterol, cardiovascular disease and diabetes, are three risk factors representing the greatest causes of death in kidney transplant recipients and have been linked to decreased graft survival. In order to maintain the best quality of life after kidney transplantation, it is recommended that both the recipient and the transplant team develop a life-style plan incorporating good nutrition and exercise practices. Make use of a few tips to help keep your blood cholesterol levels low as the holiday approaches.

- 1 First and foremost, cut out the fat! Limit your intake of red meat and dairy products with saturated fat, eliminate unhealthy trans fats and cut out processed or refined foods.
- 2 Buy and serve smaller portions. A single serving of a balanced meal is enough, refrain from diving into a second helping.
- 3 Fight with Fiber. Fiber is proven to fight cholesterol and also makes you feel full, helping control weight.
- 4 Feature “the good food” on your holiday menu. Serve some fresh baked or grilled fish to your guests and save some for the remainder of the week.
- 5 Increase your water intake as well as green tea and garlic, these help maintain good health and decrease bad cholesterol in the blood.

Following such a responsible holiday dinner, the last thing you want to do is give in to a cigarette, as smoking decreases levels of good cholesterol. This good cholesterol and your overall fitness can be raised by taking a brisk autumn walk after dinner!

For more information on nutrition for renal transplant patients, please consult your transplant team and nutritionist.

Sources :

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/481414>  
<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1516>  
<http://www.healthcentral.com/cholesterol/manage.html>

## Spotlight on University of Alberta Hospital: Over 40 Years of Renal Transplant Experience

Capital Health's University of Alberta Hospital Renal Transplant Services (RTS) division is one of 13 Canadian centres taking part in the Transplant Companions® program, offering interactive workshops and resources to pre-transplant kidney patients. The Transplant Companions workshops have proved so useful to the kidney patients of the hospital's Northern Alberta Renal Program that the workshops are now mandatory for all patients in the Edmonton area at the pre-transplant stage.

Throughout their treatment, renal patients at the University of Alberta Hospital receive care and support from the clinic's impressive multidisciplinary team. With over 34 dedicated medical professionals including nurses, physicians, recipient coordinators, dietitians, social workers and physiotherapists, the facility offers a wide range of services and programs that cater to the specific health needs of kidney patients.

The University of Alberta Hospital is no stranger to kidney transplantation. In fact, it was here that the first successful renal transplant in Western Canada was performed on Jan. 16, 1967. Current renal transplant success rates at the University of Alberta Hospital are at 98 percent. The centre performs 95 transplants per year, with 30% to 40% of organs coming from live donors. Compatibility testing is virtually failsafe, while improved anti-rejection medications and preservation techniques put kidney rejection levels below 15 percent.



Carrie Kulczycki, Laura Shabada, and Renee Merkosky, University of Alberta Hospital.

In 2007, the University of Alberta Hospital's transplant centre celebrated a milestone. Manuel Escoto, received a donated kidney from his mother on Sept. 4, 2007 to become the program's 2,000<sup>th</sup> transplant patient.

Of the 2,000 kidneys transplanted, 606 came from living donors, 1,325 were harvested from deceased donors, while 69 came in some form of combination that involved the kidney and either the pancreas (59), the liver (six), the heart (three) or islets (six).

In total, over 2,071 renal transplants have been performed at this facility to date, ensuring a better quality of life for kidney patients and their families. More complicated renal transplant procedures, which boast a near equal success rates, are also performed at the centre, including blood type incompatible transplants.

Since its inception in 1967, the University of Alberta Hospital RTS is now the largest transplant centre in the province.

*Special thanks to Laura Shabada, Lesley Wolodko, Rocky Lockham, Rhonda Reimer and Sherry Comeau as well as well as to the kidney recipients who share their personal stories with workshop participants. Their dedication makes the Transplant Companions program available to renal patients in Alberta.*

Sources :  
University of Alberta Hospital Renal Transplant Services  
[www.expressnews.ualberta.ca](http://www.expressnews.ualberta.ca)  
[www.capitalhealth.ca](http://www.capitalhealth.ca)



### FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LIVING DONORS IN MANITOBA

Earlier this year, the province of Manitoba joined British Columbia and Ontario in providing financial assistance to living organ donors.

In partnership with the Kidney Foundation of Canada – Manitoba Branch, the Manitoba Health Ministry will reimburse expenses for donors who donate a kidney or part of their liver to a friend or loved one living in the province.

Expenses eligible under this pilot program will include such items as transportation, accommodation, meals and child-care costs. The application process will be coordinated through the Kidney Foundation and all expenses must be pre-approved before reimbursement can take place.

A total of \$50,000 has been allotted to the project for 2008-09. Individuals considering a living donation to a Manitoba resident can obtain more information through the Kidney Foundation of Canada – Manitoba Branch by calling 204-989-0808.

Source : [www.news.gov.mb.ca](http://www.news.gov.mb.ca)



## The Companion Chronicles: Jean Lacroix Overcomes Adversity With a Smile

When Jean Lacroix first started having bouts of nausea, the only item of note on his medical tests was a lack of protein in his blood. Finally, a biopsy was performed revealing that he was suffering from kidney failure. One kidney was completely non-functioning while the second was operating at only 35 percent.

An ultrasound revealed yet another surprise for Lacroix. He had been born with only one functioning kidney. The left kidney had never developed due to a clogged artery and resembled a baby's kidney, a fact gone unnoticed by physicians throughout his life. This physical situation had resulted in a series of illnesses during Lacroix's youth and he had been forced to rely on a number of antibiotics to regularly combat these ailments. Early antibiotics came in very strong doses and due to the amount he'd taken, the membrane of his one functioning kidney had been damaged.

For his doctors, Lacroix was a bit of a miracle, as he'd managed to stave off total kidney failure, living with a partially functioning kidney until he was 50 years old.

After four years of pre-dialysis, four years of hemodialysis and a number of years on a transplant waiting list, Jean was paged one afternoon. A deceased donor kidney was waiting for him. Following several discussions with his nephrologists, he went immediately to the hospital where he was prepped for surgery and the transplant took place six hours later.

Lacroix's operation went smoothly and his new kidney began functioning immediately. Lacroix advises transplant patients to keep in mind that kidneys do not always function right away after transplantation and dialysis may still be required until the new kidney starts to work.

The only difficult parts of surgery for Lacroix was the recovery requirement of remaining immobilized for 24 hours and stomach cramps as a result of the operation and the morphine administered to manage the post-operative pain.

In order to ensure kidney patients could benefit from his experience, Jean went on to become Director of special projects of L'Association générale des insuffisants renaux (AGIR), a Quebec-based association of kidney disease patients. During his seven year tenure he developed and implemented a mobile dialysis unit to service kidney patients in areas of rural Quebec and for traveling patients. He also wrote an informational booklet on kidney disease distributed through AGIR, and was part of the advisory committee which developed the Transplant Companions program.

To patients considering a transplant, Lacroix offers the following advice: "Don't be scared of transplantation. There are always bad stories out there and you'll may hear some. Take the time to inform yourself properly. Don't listen to the failures because there are plenty of successes."

According to statistics from the Kidney Foundation of Canada, the kidney transplant success rate of living donor kidneys is 90% to 95% and for deceased donor kidneys, the transplant success rate is 85% to 90%.

For additional information on kidney transplantation, attend a Transplant Companions workshop. A list of participating centres is available at: [www.transplantcompanions.ca](http://www.transplantcompanions.ca).

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