



Congratulations!

You've joined the Transplant Adherence Program and are making a commitment to your new kidney and to lasting health.

Welcome to your first issue of *Post-Transplant Life*, a monthly newsletter for Transplant Adherence Program members. You'll receive information, tools and tips from the program and kidney recipients just like yourself, to help you develop methods to stay on track with your medications and follow-up appointments.

Whether you've just received a kidney or are looking to improve your adherence well after transplant, this program has something for you. You'll be sticking to your treatment plan, and we'll be sticking with you, every step of the way.

Hi, my name is Dave.

I was diagnosed with acute kidney failure in 1994. It was a complete shock since I'd always been healthy with no symptoms of illness. Yet, when I was diagnosed, my kidneys were only 10 percent functional. After two and a half years of maintaining what function was left, followed by six months of peritoneal dialysis, I underwent kidney transplant surgery after my brother Barry decided to be a living related donor by offering one of his kidneys to me. Barry gave me the most precious of gifts: a new lease on life. And to honour that gift, I do everything I can to protect the well-being of my new kidney.

You have taken a big step towards a healthy future by joining the Transplant Adherence Program and committing yourself fully to your treatment plan. It's been over 10 years since my transplant in 1997 and by strictly following my medication regimen and prescribed treatments I have kept my kidney healthy and lead a physically active life.

I habitually run, bike, golf, weight train and paddle and I am a regular participant in both the Canadian and World Transplant Games. I've proudly represented Alberta at the national level and represented Canada at the international level winning numerous medals over the years in track and field and paddling events. I've also been fortunate enough to climb Bolivia's highest mountain, Mount Sajama, with a heart recipient, Sylvain Bédard. In turn, I set a world record for the highest altitude achieved by an organ recipient, at 6,459 metres. Since then, I have followed that accomplishment by traveling to Nepal on two separate climbing expeditions to Gyajikang in the Himalayas and most recently summited Mera Peak in Nepal at 6,476 metres in June 2008.



Sticking to your medication and treatment regimen, known as *adherence*, is really important. Adherence is simpler than you might think. When I was first transplanted I would keep my medication in the cupboard from which I was most often accessing items. By seeing the medications, it would remind me to take them. My medications and clinic appointments for blood tests became as much a part of my life as meals, water and exercise. You can develop routines that work for you as well and you've got access to a great resource in the Transplant Adherence Program. I wish this great material had been available when I could have used it over 10 years ago. It's full of tips, tools and information that can help you protect your new kidney and your overall health.

Whether you're 25 or 75, you have a whole new life in front of you. My transplant changed mine and I haven't looked back. Your health is in your hands. My commitment to taking my medications exactly as prescribed and following my doctor's advice has allowed me to stay healthy and literally conquer mountains.

Welcome to a new beginning!

Dave

Adherence Self-Assessment



Answer the following indicating either “Yes” or “No” to evaluate your medication adherence.

I always refill a prescription on time.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
I have missed or skipped a dose.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
I have missed or skipped several doses in a row.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
I sometimes take more or less of my medication than prescribed.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
I accidentally take doses at the wrong time.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
I have taken a dose with the wrong food or liquid.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
I sometimes take my medication after it has expired.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
I stop taking my medications when I feel better.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
I stop taking my medications when I am not feeling well.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
I find it difficult to keep my lab appointments.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
I store my medication according to the storage instructions on the bottle.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
I am on a twice-daily immunosuppressive regimen and occasionally miss the evening dose.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No

Once completed, share your answers with your transplant team so that together you can determine if you are making the most of your treatment plan and if they can help you make adjustments to your current regimen which will work better for you.



Contact the Transplant Adherence Program

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