



# Kidney Transplants In Older Adults

Just as with any other age group, studies have shown that patients aged 65 and older benefit from an improved quality of life and a reduced mortality rate from choosing to have a kidney transplant rather than remaining on dialysis.

These personal transplant stories are excellent examples that show age should not hold you back from getting evaluated for a kidney transplant.

## Donnie



I retired from the post office in 2002, a year after my wife retired from her job in the school system. We planned on travelling and enjoyed our retirement until I started getting sick. In 2008, my kidneys failed, and I had to start dialysis.

Dialysis was getting on my nerves. I was washed out after treatments, and being on dialysis for four hours, three times a week took a lot out of life. We stopped our travel plans. When we looked into taking a dialysis cruise, it was thousands of dollars, and insurance would not pay for Dialysis at Sea.

In the first few months after I started dialysis, the staff asked me if I wanted to be listed for a transplant. I was a little concerned about my age, but I said yes, and did everything that they asked. Elsie was unsure, she didn't think that they would give a

kidney to someone my age. The people at the transplant center were wonderful. After all of the medical tests and appointments, in 2013, Elsie was at my side when the calls came. The first call didn't work out, but two weeks later, I had a second call, a young girl had donated organs, and I was given her kidney.

I was transplanted on Tuesday, and Elsie and I were at home by Friday. At age 77, I feel like I've been born again, it's a new life. Elsie says I am happier too. Now we have time to go out to lunch, and shopping and do all of the things that I was too washed out to do when I was on dialysis. We've been married for over 55 years, and now we are looking forward to a European cruise.

I would recommend a kidney transplant to everybody, it's the only doctor's office that I don't mind going to.

- By Donnie Jacobs, Transplant Patient

## Marcia



I was diagnosed with kidney failure during the year 2002. I chose dialysis in order to stay alive, but it was a life changing event! I had strict diet restrictions. My fluid intake was extremely limited, and

there was a huge list of foods that I was not allowed to have while on dialysis. All of the new rules and restrictions made me feel miserable and trapped within my own skin.

I started dialysis when I was in the hospital and then proceeded with my dialysis treatments in a clinic. While I was in the hospital my niece, Simone, told me that she was

willing to donate a kidney to me, and she would be tested to see whether she was a compatible match. She went to my transplant hospital and the results came back that my niece was a perfect match!

Early in the second year of my dialysis, the date was set for my transplant. I received my kidney transplant and now take immunosuppressant medication daily. I visit the transplant clinic three times per year, to go over my medications and to have labs done, in order to make sure that the kidney is functioning well. I am now on a normal diet,

and can eat and drink like a normal person.

If at any time I am ill, I visit the hospital in which I received the transplant to ensure that I get treated by the nephrologists, as I am very cautious, about taking any prescription medication that would in any way cause an adverse effect to my kidney. My tip for anyone considering transplant, is if you are ever in doubt about your care post-transplant, consult with your transplant coordinator, they are a wonderful resource in keeping you healthy!

- *By Marcia Richards, Transplant Patient*



*Jack*

My name is Jack Thomas and I live with my wife, Annabelle. It all began when I went to my primary care physician for an annual check-up at age 73. The results of a test indicated my kidneys were failing and I would eventually have to go on dialysis. Ultimately, I did begin dialysis in 2008. On

June 18, 2013 while receiving treatment, I received a telephone call from Allegheny General Hospital (A.G.H.). They told me they had a "perfectly matched kidney" and I should come to the hospital immediately after my treatment. Knowing that someone has lost a loved one but had sacrificially given me another opportunity at living life to the fullest even at my age brought me to tears.

My transplant surgery was on a Tuesday. When the doctors saw my wife and me walking the

halls of the hospital two days after surgery had been performed, they were amazed at how well I was doing.

I was discharged by Saturday. During my time of recovery at home, I had weekly blood work drawn, I had a monthly check up with the doctor at A. G. H. and I began a strict regimen of required medications which I took faithfully. Now, just ten months after my kidney transplant, I'm out mowing the lawn and doing everything I did before but just a little slower. (Maybe at age 84 that could be expected.)

It is because of our deep faith in God that He has been with us through this whole journey. Thank you for asking me to share this very vital and wonderful part of my life. I trust this may encourage someone else with a similar situation and experience.

- *By John W. Thomas (Jack), Transplant Patient*

These transplant stories were published in the *Your Life, Your Choice: Stories from Kidney Transplant Patients and Donors* booklet developed by the End Stage Renal Disease Network Coordinating Center.

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