

Christmas

Crackers !

Here's a bit of festive fun and the chance to win a £25 Marks & Spencer token. All of the following questions have a yuletide theme and there is one point for each correct answer. In the case of a draw, the winner will be chosen at random from entries with the highest result.



1	Who did Charles Dickens say 'Was dead as a doornail'?	
2	Where would you find Kris Kringle?	
3	Just when are the 12 days of Christmas?	
4	What's the colour of Santa's belt?	
5	Who supplies the Trafalgar Square Christmas tree?	
6	What did the child in the Christmas song want two of?	
7	Name a gift from the Magi	
8	Who was the first monarch to have a Christmas tree in England?	
9	How many sides has a snowflake?	
10	Harry Potter's first Christmas gift from Hogwarts was.....	
11	Which English ruler banned Christmas?	
12	What brought Frosty the Snowman to life?	
13	A saint's name for Boxing Day.	
14	Which singing group have had most consecutive No 1's at Christmas?	
15	Who was the second spirit to visit Scrooge?	
16	What did the singers of "We wish you a Merry Christmas" want?	
17	How many gifts in total are mentioned in the "12 Days of Christmas" song?	
18	What did Joseph do for a living?	
19	Rudolph's nose did what?	
20	And finally what did Tiny Tim observe?	

Answers please not later than 10th January 2007 to: alisonfrench34@hotmail.com or Alison & Tom French, 3 Linden Park, Bangor, BT19 6EA.

Correct answers and winners name will be included in the next newsletter.

NIKPA Contact Details

Mrs. Stella Officer, Secretary, N.I.K.P.A, c/o Ward B, Dialysis Unit, Belfast City Hospital
email: stella.officer@nikpa.org
Answer service Tel: 07050 614 059 /Fax: 07050 614 060
(50 pence per minute)



Northern Ireland Kidney Patients' Association

NIKPA Newsletter



Winter 2006

From the Chairman

Hello everyone.

Welcome to your Winter/ Christmas Newsletter. As you can see, we are continuing to develop the format of the magazine. What do you think of it? Feel free to send us your comments. Indeed, if you would like to comment on any matter relating to the Newsletter, or if you would like to submit an article on any relevant renal topic, just send it to Stella Officer, our Secretary, at the address on the back page. The main news in this edition relates to the retirement of our Treasurer, Rodney Curry. Rodney was a founder member of the Association. His contribution has

been immense, particularly in the organisation of our Holiday Scheme. His input will be greatly missed. We wish Rodney and his wife, Isabel, all that is good for the future. We are in the process of reorganising N.I.K.P.A and we urgently need your help in developing our work. So if you feel that you can help us in any way, and particularly in the areas of finance and fund-raising, social events organisation, administrative work, or any other activity, please contact Stella Officer as soon as possible.



Michael Logue, Chairman



Rodney and Isabel Currey



As the mother of a kidney patient I know that I often feel unable to make things easier or more bearable for my daughter. We as family or friends of a kidney patient give as much love, support and care as we can. Yet we still feel we want to do more. I know we cannot change the medical condition but we can help make things happen for our kidney patients by joining the Northern Ireland Kidney Patients' Association. I appeal to family and friends to join and help us make a difference for our loved ones. All are needed to make NIKPA a strong voice in promoting the interests of our loved ones. A couple of hours a month is all we are asked to give.

Please contact Mrs. Stella Officer our Secretary (address on back page), if you are willing to offer a little practical aid to help your family kidney patient.

Therese Smyth.



Meet the Team

NIKPA committee members. Pictured left to right; Back: Orla Smyth, Therese Smyth, Linda McDowell, Rod O'Doherty; Front: Stella Officer & Michael Logue.



Can't get around the city?

Try Shopmobility



Shopmobility Belfast is a charity providing powered and manual wheelchairs and scooters to people with mobility difficulties. The charity is interested in spreading information about its service to other organisations which are engaged in working with people with limited mobility and to find groups to work with as partners. The service is FREE and open to everyone who finds access to the city centre difficult, including people with disabilities, older people or those who, due to accident or illness, have temporary mobility difficulties. Shopmobility Belfast helps people with mobility problems to use the facilities of Belfast city centre and surrounding areas with greater freedom, independence and dignity, by providing daily and long term hire of equipment.

To use our service all you have to do is become a member of Shopmobility Belfast. It is free and simple to do. Just visit a branch and fill in a quick form. You should bring photo ID and proof of address, for example a driving licence, or a bus pass with a utility bill.

Shopmobility Belfast has been in operation for ten years and now has branches all over the city including, Westgate House in Queen Street and Shopping Centres such as Castle Court, Forestside, Connswater, Westwood and Park Centre. In addition to town and shopping centre service, Shopmobility Belfast also provides mobile unit services at a number of major events such as Balmoral Show. Shopmobility is also available in Ballymena, Bangor, Carrickfergus, Derry, Lisburn, Magherafelt, Newry, Newtownards and Omagh.

In response to user demand Shopmobility Belfast has introduced a programme of 'rambles' giving those with limited mobility the opportunity to visit the countryside. Shopmobility Belfast is soon to introduce a new service in conjunction with Translink at Europa Bus Station this year. It will enable anyone using public transport travelling to Belfast to get a wheelchair or scooter on arrival.

For more information please call: 028 9080 8090.

Stuck for a Christmas Gift

The Youngest Stone

A Memoir by Rene Houston (nee Stone)
Packed full of local stories and authentic photographs.

The true story of Rene's childhood on a farm in Kent during the Battle of Britain. Finding romance in Donegal and following that love to a farm in North Antrim where she has spent 54 years as wife and mother.

The Youngest Stone can be purchased directly from Rene (price £9.99) at
42B Whappstown Road, Moorfield,
Ballymena, Northern Ireland, BT42 3DB
Tel: 028 2589 1327
Email: houstons-castlegore@utvinternet.com

Join NIKPA today to win £10 M&S Voucher and membership is free!

All new members who join NIKPA before January 7th, 2007 will be entered into a draw to win one of 5 M&S vouchers valued at £10 each. If a membership form is not included with this newsletter, it is available from the Secretary (address on back page) or download it from www.NIKPA.org

A Friend in need is a friend indeed

I attended a recent meeting of the Renal Review Implementation Group at Castle Buildings and was concerned to note that pressure on dialysis places across the Centres is unabating. Forecasts predict that this pressure will increase in the future. I know only too well that haemodialysis in particular imposes considerable restrictions on the lifestyle of patients and their families and so, in order to maintain as normal a social life as possible, we all at times seek changes to our slots. I have been speaking to Dialysis Co-ordinators and they tell me that such changes are often sought, and, where possible, are achieved to the satisfaction of all. Nevertheless, with increasing demand for slots, difficulties are bound to arise when Co-ordinators attempt to facilitate every request. It is obvious that at times there will be disappointed patients. NIKPA now suggests that patients in each Haemodialysis Centre should consider putting in place some sort of self-help group comprising those patients who would be willing to facilitate each other by volunteering to change slots when an unexpected situation arises. The creation of such a system should ensure that, other than in exceptional circumstances, all requests for slot changes can be accommodated. I am in no doubt that our Dialysis Co-ordinators will continue to try to be as helpful as pressures permit.



I suggest that you put this proposition to your dialysis colleagues and so help each other!

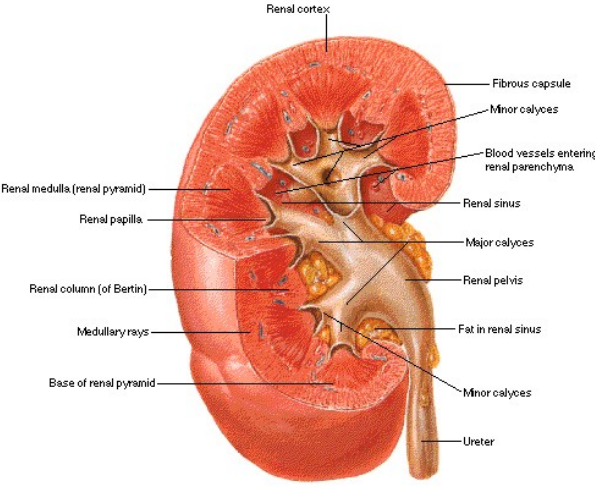
Michael Logue, Chairman.

Trying to Stay Healthy Despite Chronic Kidney Disease

Prof. Robert Maxwell, Belfast City Hospital

Kidneys perform a range of vital tasks, the most obvious being production of urine allowing elimination of toxins and waste. The kidneys maintain effective fluid balance and are key to regulating blood pressure. The entire blood volume is filtered by the kidneys many times per day, resulting in approximately 150 litres or 30 gallons of filtrate (thankfully the kidney reabsorbs most of the filtered fluid otherwise you would always be in the washroom!). The special vessels in the kidney that filter blood are called glomeruli and the rate of filtration is called the glomerular filtration rate (GFR)

Functions of normal healthy kidneys



- Filtration of blood
- Removal of waste and toxins
- Controlling blood pressure
- Regulating blood acids and alkalis
- Producing erythropoietin (Epo)
- Maintaining calcium and phosphate balance

In persons with progressive chronic kidney disease (CKD) the GFR fails. This gradual fall in GFR is often associated with high blood pressure (hypertension). Once the GFR has fallen to less than one-third of normal some symptoms such as fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite, itch or swelling may occur.

If I have chronic kidney disease what can I do to help myself?
There are a number of measures that help to prevent further kidney damage. Many of these are simply changes to lifestyle and do not involve drugs or injections.

Reducing the risk of heart disease
STOPPING SMOKING is the MOST important lifestyle change you can make to help yourself. Heart disease is much more common in persons with CKD Stopping smoking and blood pressure control will certainly reduce the risk. Your doctor may also prescribe Aspirin and a statin drug to lower cholesterol.

Blood pressure
High blood pressure can cause further damage to diseased kidneys. Excellent blood pressure can slow down the decline in GFR. Lowering the blood pressure also helps reduce the risk of future heart disease and stroke. If you have CKD simple measures can help to lower blood pressure. These include:

- Limiting salt intake in the diet
- Reducing alcohol to no more than 1-2 units per day
- If you are overweight then planned weight loss will help

- Moderate exercise if possible on a daily basis

These non-drug measures are part of a healthy lifestyle. In addition, your GP or nephrologist may prescribe drugs to lower blood pressure. Taking these as directed is part of the long-term plan to maintain your health. Often a target blood pressure is set between you and your doctor. You may like to monitor your own blood pressure at home to ensure you are "on target".

Special diet
Most persons with CKD will be invited to meet a dietician who provides helpful and practical advice on healthy eating. A diet low in salt can help both blood pressure control and reduces the tendency for fluid retention. Sometimes with CKD potassium levels in the blood are higher than normal and certain foods must be limited in amount or avoided to maintain safer potassium levels. High levels of phosphate can be another troublesome problem that can lead to long-term bone problems. A combination of dietary restriction of phosphate intake and special tablets called phosphate "binders" work together to keep phosphate in control. Binder drugs include Calcichew, Phosex and Renagel.

Anaemia
Anaemia, a low red cell count, that has many causes. Some investigation is necessary to ensure there is no source of blood loss from the gut. For persons with CKD, anaemia is usually caused by low levels of a kidney hormone called erythropoietin (Epo). Fortunately, effective treatments are available to stimulate red cell production. Maintaining a good iron intake is important to help make red cells but if the anaemia is severe, regular injections of Epo are effective. In addition sometimes it is necessary to provide some iron by tablet or injections to ensure a good response (rise in red cell count) with Epo treatment. In the future it is likely that drugs taken in tablet form will be available to correct anaemia.

Bone health
In addition to controlling phosphate levels, the kidneys also activate vitamin D in the diet. When kidneys become diseased the levels of "activated" vitamin D fall and this can lead to bone pain and increased risk of fractures. Special "activated" vitamin D preparations may be prescribed by your kidney specialist. It is important not to take additional (over the counter) vitamin supplements or herbal remedies without consulting your doctor.

Blood sugar
If you are a diabetic it is still important to maintain good control of your blood sugar to reduce the risk of eye, nerve or further kidney damage. Please try to keep your diabetic clinic appointments even if you are also attending a kidney specialist.

Summary
It is now recognised that chronic kidney disease is more common than previously realised, affecting over 80,000 persons in Northern Ireland. The good news is that with effective lifestyle changes and medical treatment the majority of persons with CKD will not develop advanced kidney failure. If you are unlucky enough to be approaching the need for dialysis or already have end-stage kidney disease (treated by dialysis or transplant) then trying to keep a positive frame of mind and keeping healthy will definitely help your long term health.

Beat the Bugs

Over the winter months, many of us will suffer colds and flu. Make sure your name isn't on the packet of tissues by acquiring a detailed understanding of how these, unpleasant viruses are transmitted. Recent research provides some useful clues.

What to do

Wash your hands properly at least five times a day, including after each episode of coughing, sneezing or nose-blowing. A quick swill under the cold tap is no help whatsoever.

A proper hand wash has five distinct steps:

- Wet hands with warm running water prior to reaching for the soap.
- Rub hands together to make lather Do this away from running water, so the lather isn't washed away.
- Wash the front and back of your hands, between your fin- under the nails. Con- washing for 20 seconds or more.
- Rinse hands under warm running water.
- Dry hands thoroughly



Tune your diet to the Seasons (Renal Patients Consult your doctor first)

Autumn is a windy season, according to Ayurveda the ancient Indian system of health. It's a time when vata, a combination of the elements of air and space within the body, is prone to imbalance, and our digestion can become erratic too. "Our diet at this time should be grounding, warming and easy to digest," says Sebastian Pole, an Ayurvedic practitioner, who recommends warm foods such as cooked grains, especially rice and oats, plenty of fruit and vegetables rich in vitamin C and root vegetables such as sweet potato, soups and foods easy to digest.

Take exercise

Couch potatoes have a greater chance of getting a cold or flu than the moderately active, according to research from Loughborough University.

"Moderate exercise boosts white blood cells as well as increasing the concentration of antibodies in the saliva, protecting against respiratory infectious," says Mike Gleeson, professor of sport science and co-author of Immune Function in Sport and Exercise (Churchill Livingstone, 2006).

Recreational activity such as gentle walking,' however, is healthier in winter than doing a marathon, according to sports scientist Dr Greg Whyte.

"The harder-training athlete is at greater risk of contracting a winter illness he says.

"There is an open window to infection in the hours that follow a prolonged workout"

Its worth avoiding physiological and psychological stress during the time of year when colds and flu are most virulent

And you should also be very careful to make sure that you do not become overtired after training.

Keep warm

A drop in body temperature can dampen the immune system and allow the bug to take hold. In very cold weather, it's sensible to wear a scarf over your nose, the first line of defence in the immune system. The cilia in the nostrils that brush away bacteria and viruses slowdown when chilly.

Be happy

A cold virus was squirted up the noses of human guinea pigs who were then asked to fill in a happiness questionnaire at Carnegie Mellon University in Pennsylvania. Happy people were found to be three times less likely to develop a cold.

The Belfast Telegraph

Association Holiday Programme

Rodney Curry, our Treasurer, and his wife. Isabel, once again organised a weekend break for twenty two patients and friends to the Burrendale Hotel, Newcastle, from the 6th to 8th. October last. According to all reports, a fine time was had by all! Below is a selection of letters received from our happy campers. The letters speak for themselves!



The Burrendale Hotel, Newcastle,
Co. Down



Robin Cavan writes;
Dear Rodney,

I am writing on behalf of my wife and myself to thank you and the Northern Ireland Kidney Patients' Association for arranging and providing us with a beautiful weekend in the middle of the wonderful Mourne country. The hotel and the meals they provided were excellent and we are truly grateful to be given the opportunity. It enabled my wife to get away from the work she has to do in caring for me at home and I benefitted, having a restful time. We appreciate the work being done by NIKPA in helping patients like myself who require dialysis.

Here is another letter of appreciation.

Dear Mr. Curry,

Just dropping you a line to say thank you for all your hard work in organising our weekend at the Burrendale Hotel, Newcastle. I appreciate how much dedication went into all your efforts in meeting the needs of such a large group. It was great to meet and chat to other kidney patients and also to meet you and your lovely wife.



The Burrendale is such a lovely hotel and the break was most enjoyable. The staff could not have been nicer nor more helpful.

Good luck and thanks again.
Mrs. Evelyn Jennett.

These are just samples of the letters which we have received in relation to the NIKPA Holiday Programme. It is obvious that this aspect of the Association's work has been highly successful, thanks to Rodney and Isabel.

Michael Logue. Chairman.