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AKF IN ACTION

Fighting kidney disease and helping people live healthier lives.

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ADPKD: KNOW WHAT'S NEXT



AKF launches new educational resources to raise awareness and empower people living with ADPKD

This year, AKF launched the second phase of our educational campaign to raise awareness and improve outcomes for people living with autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease (ADPKD), a genetic disorder that causes fluid-filled cysts to grow in the kidneys.

ADPKD is the most common type of polycystic kidney disease (PKD) and one of the most common genetic kidney diseases. PKD affects up to 12 million people around the world and is the fourth leading cause of kidney failure. About nine out of every 10 people with PKD have ADPKD, which is caused by a change in a specific gene (either the PKD1 or PKD2 gene). If just one parent has ADPKD, there is a 50% chance that they will pass the changed gene to each of their children.

The second phase of the ADPKD campaign features:

- Information on imaging tests—including ultrasounds, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computed tomography scans (CT)—to diagnose and determine the severity and progression of ADPKD.
- A video explaining the different types of imaging tests, along with an accompanying new downloadable guide.
- Information on how people with ADPKD can advocate for themselves and have ongoing, continued conversations with their nephrologist and healthcare team.

Visit the new ADPKD resources at kidneyfund.org/adpkd.

AKF's ADPKD education and awareness campaign is made possible with support from Otsuka.

Second season of AKF's 'The Kidney Collective' podcast debuts

Are you caught up with the newest season of our podcast, The Kidney Collective™? This season focuses on rare and genetic kidney diseases and the shared experiences that connect the larger kidney community. We explore what it's like to live with various rare kidney diseases and why it's important to raise awareness. "Rare Voices, Relatable Stories" is the first of several seasons that will be published throughout 2026.

Visit kidneyfund.org/podcast for information about the guests, episode resources and links to watch or listen. Don't forget to subscribe or follow the podcast wherever you listen and stay tuned for our next season focusing on mental health and kidney disease!



AKF announces latest Kidney Health Coach Health Equity Grant recipients

This spring, AKF launched the fourth year of our Kidney Health Coach® (KHC) Health Equity Grant program. The goal of the program is to expand the reach and impact of KHC by empowering organizations and coaches across the country to reach at-risk communities and educate them about chronic kidney disease (CKD) prevention and management.

AKF was pleased to award these 12 organizations with grants:

- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Western Region
- American Diabetes Association
- American Nephrology Nurses Association—MichigANNA Chapter—Detroit, Michigan
- Be the Change Today—Birmingham, Alabama
- Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc.®—Washington, D.C.
- Chicanos Por La Causa—Phoenix, Arizona
- Greenville Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.—Greenville, South Carolina
- Kappa Detroit Foundation—Detroit, Michigan
- Kidneys Quest Foundation—San Fernando, California
- New Life Community Alliance—South Dekalb, Georgia
- Roosevelt & Ruth Marlow Educational and Recreational Foundation—Ash, North Carolina
- Trinity Educational Community Center—Health and Wellness Ministry—Columbia, South Carolina



To learn more about this year's KHC Health Equity Grant recipients, visit kidneyfund.org/khc-awareness.

For more information on the Kidney Health Coach program, visit kidneyfund.org/khc.

How to contact AKF's Grant Services:

Please do not send messages, voicemails or emails to other departments to request a call back; instead, use the communication methods listed below:

By phone: Call us at (800) 795-3226 Monday—Thursday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m ET to speak with a live representative.

GMS Assist: Visit GMSassist.com to schedule a phone appointment for a day and time that is convenient for you. All times available are in ET.

Through GMS: Message us through your GMS account at gms.KidneyFund.org. Be sure to also check the "Information" and "FAQ" tabs for more updated information.

Online: Visit KidneyFund.org to learn more about AKF's financial assistance programs, or email us at registration@kidneyfund.org if you are having issues registering on GMS.

The connection between your mouth and your kidneys



Oral health includes the care of your teeth, gums, tongue, saliva and the rest of your mouth. When germs in your teeth or gums cause an infection, your immune system responds with inflammation (swelling), and that inflammation can affect your body beyond your oral cavity. Over time, this chronic inflammation can negatively impact the heart and kidneys. If you are on dialysis or have had a kidney transplant, taking care of your mouth is an important part of taking care of your whole body.

Why oral health matters when you have kidney disease

When your kidneys aren't working properly, your body may have a harder time fighting infections. A dental problem that might stay minor for someone else can become more serious for someone with kidney disease. Keeping your mouth healthy also supports your heart and blood vessels, which are closely connected to kidney health. Always tell your dentist and dental team about your kidney condition and bring an up-to-date list of your medicines so they can work with your kidney team to keep you safe.

What to expect when you have end-stage kidney disease (ESKD)

Hemodialysis

Heparin, a blood thinner used during hemodialysis, can raise your risk of bleeding for several hours after treatment. Try to schedule dental visits on non-dialysis days when possible.

Peritoneal dialysis

Strong infection prevention is especially important with peritoneal dialysis (PD). Let your dentist know you are on PD so they can coordinate with your kidney team before any procedure.

Transplant candidates and recipients

A dental exam is often part of the transplant evaluation, and your transplant team may ask for "dental clearance" before approving you for surgery. After a transplant, anti-rejection medicines weaken your immune system and can make infections more serious. Some of these medicines also cause swollen gums, gum overgrowth (when gums grow over the teeth), mouth sores or thrush (a yeast infection that

looks like white patches). Stay on top of regular cleanings and ask your dentist to check for signs of mouth cancer at every visit, since anti-rejection medicines can raise your risk of some cancers over time.

When to call your dentist

Don't wait for a toothache. Plan a cleaning every six months, and call your dentist right away if you notice:

- Bleeding gums when you brush or floss
- Loose teeth or gums pulling away from teeth
- Tooth or jaw pain, or trouble chewing
- Swelling in the gums, face or jaw
- Mouth sores that don't heal
- Bad breath that doesn't improve with brushing or cracked or broken teeth

Habits to protect your mouth and your kidneys

- Brush twice a day and floss daily with a soft-bristle toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. Use floss picks or interdental cleaners if floss is hard to manage.
- Manage dry mouth by sipping water within your fluid limits, chewing sugar-free gum or asking about saliva substitutes. If your dentist recommends a fluoride rinse, choose one without alcohol; alcohol can make dry mouth worse.
- Limit sugary foods and drinks that feed cavity-causing bacteria, and avoid all forms of tobacco, which raise the risk of gum disease and slow healing.
- Be careful with pain medicines. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen or naproxen are unsafe for people on dialysis or who have had a transplant. Talk with your doctor about pain medicines that are safe to use for dental pain like acetaminophen (Tylenol).
- Ask about antibiotics before procedures. If you are on dialysis or have had a transplant, your kidney team can tell you whether you need antibiotics before dental work and which ones are safest for your kidneys. If you are on peritoneal dialysis, it's important to notify your nephrologist about any dental procedure, as you will need a pre-dental procedure antibiotic to prevent any infections.
- Tell your dentist about medicines you may be taking for your bone health. Some of these medicines can affect healing in the jaw after a tooth removal or other dental surgery. Your dentist and kidney team can plan procedures safely.
- Care for dentures daily. Clean them every day and remove them at night to help prevent sores and infections.
- Keep your kidney and dental teams in touch. Ask your dentist to share notes with your nephrologist and let your kidney team know about any planned dental procedures.

Please note: Every person with kidney disease has different needs. Talk with your doctor, dentist and dialysis or transplant team about the dental care plan that is right for you.



AKF Ambassadors advocate for legislation to protect living organ donors and access to healthcare during 2026 Kidney Action Summit

On May 6, 35 AKF Ambassadors from 21 states joined AKF staff on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. to advocate for legislation that would protect living organ donors and access to healthcare. Throughout the day, Ambassadors had 61 Congressional meetings to advocate for two vital issues:

- The Living Donor Protection Act of 2025, which would prevent insurers from denying or canceling coverage, refusing to issue coverage, changing the price of coverage, or otherwise modifying any aspects of a life, disability or long-term care insurance policy for someone solely because they are a living organ donor. The legislation would also ensure that living organ donors have Family Medical Leave Act protections so they can take time off work to donate a kidney and recover without fear of losing their job. For more information on this bill, visit kidneyfund.org/ldpa-2025.
- The Kidney Care Access Protection Act, which would take steps to improve and protect dialysis patients' access to innovative therapies and high-quality kidney healthcare.

To learn more about becoming an AKF Ambassador and getting involved in AKF's Advocacy Network, and to support these bills by filling out an action alert, visit kidneyfund.org/advocacynetwork.



AKF Staff Spotlight



Name: Gwendolyn Dewberry

Hometown: Montgomery County, Maryland

What do you do at AKF?

I am the senior director of grant services. I manage AKF's patient financial assistance programs, ensuring that eligible applicants

receive the support they need to cover the expenses associated with kidney disease.

What is your personal connection to kidney disease?

I have a family member who was on dialysis and has recently received a transplant, and I also serve as a caregiver. Through this experience, I have a personal understanding of the pressures, financial burden and ongoing stress involved.

Why are you passionate about fighting kidney disease?

Kidney disease is costly and takes a significant toll on someone's ability to fully enjoy life. I have personally witnessed the challenges my loved one faces—going to dialysis three times a week, continuing to work and constantly feeling exhausted. I've also seen the frustration of searching for a living donor while remaining on the transplant list, all while navigating an overwhelming number of medical appointments.

What is the best part of your job?

I love helping people. Knowing that I can help ease some of the related stress and financial expenses of kidney disease through our grants is rewarding.

What are your favorite hobbies outside of work?

I love to work in my garden and help my fiancé with his DJ and sound business.

Kidney Kitchen®

This and other recipes can be found at kitchen.kidneyfund.org.

Tropical Mini Pavlovas

Makes: 8 pavlovas

Serving size: 1 pavlova

Recipe contributed by Satellite Healthcare.



Prep time: 30 min

Cook Time: 2 hours

Nutrition Facts

(1 serving = 1 pavlova)

Calories = 322

Carbohydrates = 48 g

Sugar = 44 g

Fiber = 2 g

Calcium = 44 mg

Fat = 14 g

Saturated Fat = 9 g

Trans Fat = 0 g

Protein = 4 g

Phosphorus = 55 mg

Cholesterol = 41 mg

Sodium = 42 mg

Potassium = 347 mg

Ingredients for Pavlovas

- 4 egg whites
- 1 cup caster (superfine) sugar
- 1 teaspoon real vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon white vinegar
- 1 passionfruit
- 1 ¼ cups whipping cream
- 1/3 cup coconut flakes
- 4 ½-inch slices of fresh pineapple, cut into chunks
- ½ mini seedless watermelon, cut into chunks
- ½ cantaloupe, cut into chunks

Special Equipment

- Electric mixer
- Sieve



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300°F.
2. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper and draw four 4-inch circles on each one. Turn the paper over.
3. With an electric mixer, whisk egg whites until soft peaks form. Add sugar 1 tablespoon at a time, whisking well after each addition to make sure sugar dissolves, until mixture is thick and glossy.
4. Fold in vanilla, cornstarch and vinegar.
5. Spoon meringue mixture into circles on parchment paper, flattening them slightly.
6. Reduce oven to 275°F and bake meringues for 1 hour. Turn the heat off, but DO NOT REMOVE MERINGUES FROM OVEN. Leave in oven 1 hour with the door open.
7. Scoop pulp from passionfruit and push through a sieve to remove seeds.
8. Whip cream until soft peaks form, then fold in passionfruit juice. Chill until needed.
9. Heat a dry frying pan over medium-high heat. Add coconut and toast until golden, shaking pan constantly to keep from burning. Remove from pan immediately.
10. Top each round meringue with whipped cream, pineapple, watermelon and cantaloupe.
11. Sprinkle with toasted coconut.
12. Serve immediately.



Cooking Tip

Must be eaten within 30 minutes. To keep longer, store meringues in an airtight container and toppings separately.

11921 Rockville Pike
Suite 300
Rockville, MD 20852
(800) 638-8299

[KidneyFund.org](https://www.kidneyfund.org)

AKF is fighting on all fronts as the nation's leading kidney nonprofit. Sign-up to receive our monthly e-newsletter to get the latest updates at [KidneyFund.org/sign-up](https://www.kidneyfund.org/sign-up).



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How to donate to support the kidney community today

Your donation helps the American Kidney Fund fight kidney disease and support millions of patients in living healthier lives. 96¢ of every dollar donated goes directly to patient support and kidney disease programs.

You can give in any of the following ways:

OPTION 1: Donate by mail

Mail your check or cash gift to:

American Kidney Fund
11921 Rockville Pike, Suite 300
Rockville, MD 20852

OPTION 2: Donate online or over the phone

Visit KidneyFund.org or call us at (800) 638-8299 and press 1 twice.

OPTION 3: Make a legacy gift

Making a gift in your will or living trust, known as a bequest, can guarantee that your legacy endures. Your gift may be a specific dollar amount, a percentage of your estate or the remainder after all other provisions are specified. AKF offers a free online resource to help you write your legal will at no personal cost. Please visit KidneyFund.org/freewill2026 to get started.

OPTION 4: KidneyNation

Start your own online fundraiser, community event, corporate fundraiser or charity live stream: KidneyNation.org.



CUT HERE

Please return the slip below (along with any checks) to:

American Kidney Fund
11921 Rockville Pike, Suite 300
Rockville, MD 20852

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Check enclosed (please make payable to American Kidney Fund)

Credit Card

One-time

Monthly

MasterCard

American Express

Visa

Discover

Credit card #: _____

Expiration date: _____

Cardholder's Signature: _____

Cardholder's Name (print): _____

Here are two additional ways to give to AKF:

Partners for Change

Join our Partners for Change community, a group of dedicated American Kidney Fund monthly supporters who are truly partners in every sense of the word. Your regular, monthly gift will support prevention efforts to stop kidney disease before it starts and fund programs that enable people with kidney disease to lead healthier lives.

Monthly giving is the most cost-efficient way to deliver your support to AKF because it allows us to reduce our mailings and other fundraising campaigns. To show our appreciation for your generous, regular commitment to AKF, you'll also receive some special benefits:

- You will receive regular updates about AKF's programs to support kidney patients and those at risk for kidney disease.
- A summary receipt of your donations for the previous year each January
- A personal Partners for Change representative to answer your questions

To sign up, please call (800) 638-8299 (and press 1 twice) or visit us at [kidneyfund.org](https://www.kidneyfund.org).



Vehicle donation program

Has your vehicle seen better days? Give your old ride new life by donating it to help people fight kidney disease and live healthier lives. By donating your used car, truck, boat or RV, you can be assured that your contribution will be used to fund critical services and programs for the individuals we help.

There is no charge to have your vehicle picked up from your home, work or auto shop, and next-day pickup is available. To donate, call our vehicle donation processor, Car Program Inc., at (800) 936-4356.

Even non-working cars can make a difference, so please keep the American Kidney Fund in mind when you are ready to say goodbye to your old vehicle!

