Support Programs & Resources

for Kidney Disease and Dialysis Patients, Families & Caregivers

A guide to bursaries, financial assistance, mental health, nutrition, transportation, translation, caregiver, employment and community supports available in Ontario and Saskatchewan

Availability, phone numbers and eligibility can change; contact each organization directly to confirm current details.

Bursaries & Educational Assistance

The Kidney Foundation of Canada — Bursary Program

The general purpose of the bursary is to assist kidney disease patients and their family members to further their education and/or training. The total funds available are $2,000 annually. Four awards of $500 each may be awarded each year. A bursary may be awarded to an individual a maximum of two times.

kidney.ca/support/programs-and-services/

The Kidney Foundation of Canada — Transplant Recipient Bursaries

The general purpose of the bursary is to assist transplant recipients and their family members to further their education and/or training. The total funds available are $2,000 annually. Four awards of $500 each may be awarded each year. A bursary may be awarded to an individual a maximum of two times.

kidney.ca/support/programs-and-services/

Financial Assistance

Kidney Foundation of Canada — Short-Term Financial Assistance

Emergency funding for costs related to kidney disease and dialysis, including transportation, dialysis training, medication/equipment and emergency living expenses. Applications go through a renal social worker.

kidney.ca/Support/Programs-Services/Short-Term-Financial-Assistance

Trillium Drug Program (Ontario)

Helps Ontarians with a valid OHIP card who spend a large share of household income on prescription drugs. Once an income-based deductible is met, most Ontario Drug Benefit-listed medications cost as little as $2 per prescription for the rest of the program year (Aug 1 – Jul 31).

ontario.ca/page/get-help-high-prescription-drug-costs

Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) / Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID)

Provincial income and health-benefit support for people whose kidney disease significantly limits daily activity or ability to work. Can help with living costs, drug coverage and medical transportation.

ontario.ca/page/ontario-disability-support-program | saskatchewan.ca — Income Support for People with Disabilities | Ontario: 1-888-789-4199 | Saskatchewan: 1-306-798-0033

CRA Disability Tax Credit & Medical Expense Tax Credit

People receiving dialysis automatically qualify for the federal Disability Tax Credit. Dialysis-related costs, travel for treatment, and other medical expenses can also be claimed on your tax return.

canada.ca — Disability Tax Credit | canada.ca — Eligible medical expenses

Mental Health & Emotional Support

KIDNEY CONNECT Peer Support Program

Free, confidential one-on-one and group peer support connecting patients, caregivers, family and living donors with trained volunteers who have lived experience of kidney disease. Support is offered by phone, and through a private online discussion forum.

1-866-390-7337 | kidney.ca/support/peer-support | kidneyconnect.ca

Kidney Wellness Hub

A free online platform from the Kidney Foundation supporting the physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing of kidney disease patients and caregivers.

kidneywellnesshub.ca

PKD Peer Support Group

Monthly virtual peer support meetings specifically for people with polycystic kidney disease (PKD), their caregivers and living donors. Run jointly by the Kidney Foundation and the PKD Foundation of Canada.

endpkd.ca/pkd_peer_support_group_kidney_foundation_of_canada | Registration required — pre-register through the Kidney Foundation website

ConnexOntario / Saskatchewan HealthLine 811

Free, confidential referral lines connecting Ontario and Saskatchewan residents to local mental health, addictions and crisis services, 24/7.

ConnexOntario: 1-866-531-2600 (call/text 247247) | Saskatchewan HealthLine: 811

Nutrition Resources

Kidney Community Kitchen

A free national website from the Kidney Foundation with kidney-friendly recipes, meal ideas and an "Ask a Dietician" feature for direct questions to a renal dietician.

kidneycommunitykitchen.ca

Canadian Association of Nephrology Dieticians (CAND)

Publishes the "Kidney Friendly Cooking" cookbook (print or e-version) written by a team of renal dieticians for people at all stages of kidney function, plus general patient resources.

renalrd.ca

Transportation Support

Ontario Works (OW) / ODSP Medical Transportation Assistance

Eligible recipients can receive financial assistance toward the cost of medical transportation, including trips to dialysis.

ontario.ca/page/ontario-disability-support-program-health-and-disability-benefits | ontario.ca/page/ontario-works-health-related-benefits

Canadian Red Cross — Community Transportation Programs

In several Ontario regions the Red Cross partners with local municipalities (e.g. Passenger Plus / Passenger Assistant Programs in Peel Region) to provide subsidized rides to dialysis and other medical appointments for eligible residents.

redcross.ca/in-your-community/ontario/nutrition-and-transportation/transportation

Kidney Foundation Short-Term Financial Assistance

Can help cover transportation costs for a short period when other resources have been exhausted (see Financial Assistance section above).

kidney.ca/en/support/programs-and-services/short-term-financial-assistance

Local Community & Volunteer Driver Programs

Many towns and counties have a local non-profit or volunteer driver program that offers low-cost rides to medical appointments, including dialysis. Availability and cost vary widely by community.

Call 211 (Ontario or Saskatchewan) or ask your renal social worker for options near you

Translation & Interpretation Services

Remote Interpretation Ontario (RIO) Network — Access Alliance

Over-the-phone interpretation in 150+ languages, available 24 hours a day to health and social service providers across Ontario.

accessalliance.ca — Access Alliance Language Services | languages@accessalliance.ca

211 Ontario / 211 Saskatchewan

Free, confidential helpline (call, text or chat) offering information and referrals to community, social and health services in over 150 languages.

Dial 2-1-1 | 211ontario.ca | sk.211.ca

Caregiver Supports

Ontario Caregiver Organization (OCO)

Free, province-wide programs for caregivers, including a helpline for information and referral, the SCALE mental-health education program, 1:1 and group peer support, and an online eLearning library. Available in English and French.

1-833-416-2273 | ontariocaregiver.ca

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

A free 6-week workshop (in person or online, offered through various regional health teams) teaching family caregivers of people with chronic illness practical self-care and communication tools.

powerfultoolsforcaregivers.org

Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence

A national organization providing research-based resources, guides and advocacy to support family caregivers across Canada.

416-322-5928 | canadiancaregiving.org

KIDNEY CONNECT Peer Support (for caregivers)

The Kidney Foundation's peer support program is open to caregivers and family members, not just patients — see Mental Health section above for contact details.

Employment Support

Kidney Foundation of Canada — Working with Kidney Disease

Guidance and patient handbooks on discussing dialysis schedules and accommodations with an employer, understanding disability benefits, and returning to work after starting treatment or receiving a transplant.

kidney.ca — search "work" or "employment" | Ask your renal social worker for the printed handbook

Employment Insurance (EI) Sickness Benefits

Federal program providing up to 26 weeks of income replacement for people who cannot work due to illness, including kidney disease or dialysis-related recovery.

canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness.html | 1-800-206-7218

Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D) Benefit

Monthly benefit for CPP contributors under 65 whose kidney disease results in a severe and prolonged disability that regularly prevents them from working.

canada.ca/en/services/benefits/publicpensions/cpp/cpp-disability-benefit.html | 1-800-277-9914

Community Programs

Kidney Foundation Summer Camps

Subsidized summer camp programs for children and youth living with kidney disease.

kidney.ca/en/support/programs-and-services/summer-camps

Local Kidney Foundation Chapters

Community chapters across Ontario and Saskatchewan run local education events, fundraising walks and volunteer opportunities that connect patients and families with their local kidney community.

Southwestern Ontario (London) Chapter: 226-919-5894 | Saskatchewan Branch: 1-833-664-8588 / info.sk@kidney.ca

The Kidney Walk

An annual community walk and fundraising event held in cities across Canada that brings together patients, families, donors and care teams to raise awareness and funds for kidney research and programs.

kidneywalk.ca

PKD Foundation of Canada

A national community and resource network specifically for people affected by polycystic kidney disease (PKD), including education events and the PKD peer support group listed above.

endpkd.ca