Some Common Misconceptions about Transplant

**MYTH # 1  DIALYSIS MUST PRECEDE TRANSPLANT**
Actually, people who receive a kidney transplant before going on dialysis do better than patients who went on dialysis before transplant! Both patient and kidney transplant survival are better when patients undergo pre-emptive transplantation (meaning transplant before needing dialysis).

**MYTH # 2  TRANSPLANT IS A LAST RESORT**
Transplant should be the first choice, whenever possible. As mentioned above, people do better if they were not on dialysis. In general, the healthier someone is, the better they do after transplant.

**MYTH # 3  ONLY A CLOSE RELATIVE CAN DONATE**
Just about anyone can donate a kidney to someone in need of a transplant, as long as the donor is medically able to donate. With the medications available today, the genetic match of the transplant isn’t as important as it used to be. In fact, even if you have a willing but incompatible donor (for example, incompatible blood type), you could enter a registry to “swap” donors with other incompatible pairs.

**MYTH #4  LIVING KIDNEY DONATION IS A NEW FIELD**
The first successful living kidney donation occurred back in 1954—more than half a century ago! Living donation has a great track record and surgical innovations have improved the experience of living kidney donors tremendously!

**MYTH #5  LIVING DONORS FACE A LONG RECOVERY**
With the availability of today’s minimally invasive surgical procedures for living kidney donors, the majority of donors are in the hospital for just 1 to 2 days, and are recovered enough to return to work within about 3 weeks after donation!

We hope you can use this information to feel confident asking someone to be your Kidney Champion!

For more information, please visit our website at:  
www.cornellsurgery.org/transplantchampion

There you will find tools that can help your Champion, including:
* This educational brochure
* A brochure to explain the Kidney Champion program to the person(s) you ask to be your Kidney Champion
* A sample letter/email
* Information about starting a Cause on Facebook
* A sample event invitation

Feel free to contact us directly at: livingdonorkidneycenter@med.cornell.edu  
for more information!
For people like you who need a kidney transplant, asking friends, co-workers, community members and even family members to consider donating a kidney can be a daunting task. We encourage you to identify a “Kidney Champion”, someone who is willing to educate others about your condition and about your transplant options so that you do not need to feel awkward.

IN 2005, LESS THAN 2.5% OF PATIENTS UNDERWENT A LIVING DONOR KIDNEY TRANSPLANT BEFORE NEEDING DIALYSIS
USRDS 2007 Annual Report

WHAT DOES A KIDNEY CHAMPION DO?
A Kidney Champion lets people in their circle know that you have kidney failure and then provides education/educational materials about kidney disease, treatment options (dialysis or transplant) and living kidney donation. At the Living Donor Kidney Center, we have developed tools for Kidney Champions to use so it is easier for them to get the word out.

HOW YOUR KIDNEY CHAMPION CAN HELP
SEND A LETTER OR AN EMAIL
Kidney Champions can tell people about your plight through a letter or email. Your Champion will educate them about the available options for kidney failure, and explain why they chose to become your Kidney Champion. Our website has some ideas and tools that your Kidney Champion can easily customize and use to make this process easier.

HOST A GATHERING
Your Kidney Champion may set up a gathering at your home, at church, or at a community center and invite people to come learn about kidney disease and the treatment options available to people with kidney failure. They may tell your story so that the attendees can better understand what living with kidney disease means. Your Kidney Champion can also invite a healthcare provider such as a nurse, social worker, or doctor to attend and speak with the group. We encourage your kidney champion to contact us if they would like us to assist them in finding someone to speak at their gathering.

CREATE A FACEBOOK PAGE OR WEBPAGE
The internet can be a great tool for spreading the word about kidney disease and the impact it is having on you. For example, your Kidney Champion can create a “Cause” on Facebook to educate people, gather support, and even raise funds! We encourage your Kidney Champion to link to our website in order to guide the audience to the educational material and tools we have available.

WHO MAKES A GOOD KIDNEY CHAMPION?
Anyone can be a Kidney Champion for someone who needs a kidney transplant. Often times, a Kidney Champion is someone who already donated or received a kidney, someone who wanted to donate a kidney but was ruled out because of their own medical or psychosocial issues, or even children who are too young to donate themselves but want to help in some way.