

Reclaiming a Lifestyle

Bryan Davis | Portland, OR

Like many people with chronic kidney disease, Bryan's condition was initially misdiagnosed because he did not have insurance.

"My life with end stage renal disease started when I was 23 or 24," Bryan said. "I was working a couple different jobs and ended up waking up in the middle of the night with severe back pain and I couldn't speak."

Bryan visited his doctor who prescribed painkillers and sent him on his way. When Bryan was 26, he had a job with health insurance and visited his doctor again. The doctor asked if there was any history in his family with kidney disease.

"Turned out my grandma has a kidney issue; the entire family has polycystic kidney disease," he recounted. "Then I started working on a no caffeine, low fat, low salt diet to work towards better health. Unfortunately, my numbers kept dropping and dropping, and at the end of last year, I needed to go onto dialysis.

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Added flexibility in treatment

Early kidney disease usually doesn't have any symptoms and symptoms of ESRD are similar to other conditions. Therefore, kidney disease is often missed even though there are simple tests that can diagnose ESRD.

Including coverage of kidney disease screening in wellness visits would drastically improve rates of early diagnosis of ESRD.

Bryan pursued proper training for at-home peritoneal dialysis quickly after his diagnosis. Through this treatment, Bryan can maintain his schedule whether at home or at the office. He used that first month after his catheter installment surgery to focus on healing, and the second month he started manually exchanging the fluids. He was then able to move on to using a cyclor machine.

It was a lot of hard work to get trained, but Bryan finds the added flexibility and involvement in his treatment very rewarding.

Improving access to organ donation

Bryan is excited at the prospect of qualifying for an organ donation and has been working hard to meet the requirements for the procedure.

While he is optimistic about his situation, he recognizes that demand far outweighs supply for kidney transplants.

"Organ donation probably needs to be spoken more about," he said. "Organ donation is something that as a kid when I was 16, never realized that at 40 I would need an organ -- if something does happen to you, [donation] can save multiple people's lives."

Home peritoneal dialysis provides many benefits, including:

- Greater lifestyle flexibility and independence.
- A less restricted diet.
- Longer lasting residual kidney function.