



News Release

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Woman's 'second chance at life' following organ transplant

A woman who has been given a 'second chance at life' is backing calls for people to sign up to become an organ donor this Organ Donation Week.

Katrina Vernon's kidneys first failed in 2012, before failing again in 2014. She received dialysis treatment at Dorset County Hospital three times a week and her life was put on hold.

But in September 2016 32-year-old Katrina, who is from Weymouth, got a call that would change her life. She had a donor.

Since then her life has been transformed and things that were once a dream have now become a reality as she is currently expecting her first child with her husband Sam.

She said: "Your life is just on pause. We have wanted to have a family for so long and thinking I was never going to be able to start one was heart-breaking.

"When we got the call about the donor, I was hit by mixed feelings – elation but also sadness for the donor and their family.

"Kidney disease hit me hard – I was just in this fog for years and I couldn't do anything. It was a struggle to get up. Now I am back my old self – I feel so young again.

"The realisation that nothing was hypothetical anymore was just amazing. To be able to turn around to Sam and say 'we're pregnant' was just surreal. The transplant has just given me a second chance at life.

"I treasure my donor's gift and I will never take it for granted."

Katrina, who is an organ donor herself, added: "Everyone has their personal choice about organ donation. For myself, I believe that for a lot of families it brings comfort that their loved one is helping someone else.

"My donor allowed me to hit the refresh button. It was a selfless act. What better gift is there than the gift of life?"

Andrew Ball, Consultant in Anaesthetics and Critical Care at Dorset County Hospital said: "Each day in the UK, three people die on the waiting list for an organ transplant.

“A single donor may be able to change the life of up to eight people.

“Many people aren’t aware that even if they are on the organ donor register, donation would not go ahead without their families support.

“Many donation opportunities are lost each year because families don’t know if their loved one wanted to become a donor.

“I would urge everyone to visit the organ donor website, register their choice about donation and discuss this with their family.”

For more information, or to register as a donor, visit organdonation.nhs.uk

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PHOTO ONE: Katrina Vernon with husband Sam Vernon

PHOTO TWO: Katrina Vernon

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