

DR. DAVID CAMP - ALTRUISTIC KIDNEY DONATION

In February 2020, Dr. David Camp, a chiropractor from Lacey, WA, traveled to Germany to have two lumbar discs replaced, a surgery that he hoped would finally resolve his debilitating back issues caused by a car accident in 2015. Little did he know, this would be the start of a long and very painful medical experience.

While under anesthesia, Dr. Camp's spine surgeon found a rupturing abdominal aneurysm. Without a vascular surgeon on staff, Dr. Camp was rushed to another hospital for an aneurysm repair. Recovery was complicated, and Dr. Camp was in and out of the intensive care unit, his abdomen swollen with fluid. The hospital team thought this was a post-surgical seroma, but the gallon of fluid they drained from his body was never sent for testing. As days passed, Dr. Camp's condition continued to deteriorate, and a week later his abdomen was swollen with fluid again. *"They had put a port in my jugular vein, and they were giving me fentanyl and morphine at the highest doses that were safe, and that never lowered my pain below a seven,"* said Dr. Camp. *"I got a cold while I was in the hospital and I coughed one night. I coughed and my ureter exploded ... that was like a 15 out of 10 pain."* An MRI revealed a ruptured ureter and the abdominal fluid was drained and sent for testing, which came back as urine. The surgeons laid out five surgical options, but Dr. Camp wasn't interested in another open abdominal procedure and asked about transplant. *"They said under German law, they don't allow living kidney donors unless you're donating it to a close family member. They basically said they would take my kidney and study it, which means they would put it in formaldehyde and it would be useless. In my mind losing a healthy kidney and no one getting the benefit of that didn't make any sense."* Dr. Camp decided to look into altruistic kidney donation closer to home and emailed Dr. Ramasamy Bakthavatsalam. *"I appreciate Dr. Baktha probably more than he knows. Two days after I sent an email, he called me in Germany to ask about the situation. And, you know, that was an important part of my outlook on having this kidney donated."*

In March 2020, 46 days after being admitted, Dr. Camp was finally discharged from the hospital with a nephrostomy tube. He was far from good health and couldn't walk 10 feet due to the 56 pounds of muscle mass he had lost while inpatient. Dr. Camp and his wife rented an apartment and spent the next four months recuperating so Dr. Camp would be strong enough to travel.

Finally in July 2020, five months after the initial surgery, Dr. Camp was back in the United States and began testing for kidney donation. In November 2020, it was time to donate. *"I've got a lot of adhesions from having my organs bathed in urine for so long, and instead of doing a traditional four-inch scar to remove my kidney, they had to split me almost a full 12 inches because my kidney was encased in scar tissue."* Dr. Camp doesn't know who received his kidney, but he does know that individual is in excellent health. *"I assume that they're doing well because I've always tried to stay healthy. To me, it was just a natural thing that I wouldn't want to just get the kidney out just to be done with it. I've been in chiropractic practice for 29 years and I've served people, and to me it made sense to at least allow somebody the opportunity to utilize the kidney that was healthy."*



Dr. Camp on a fishing trip post-donation