



## A Phone App Can **Save Your Life**

by Lori Hartwell

We know the benefits of having a cell phone on us so we can call for help, receive a call for a kidney, or just tell someone where to pick us up. But there may be a time when you can't speak for yourself, due to severe symptoms or losing consciousness, and a phone app can speak for you!

People who have kidney disease have complex issues. We take multiple medications and we have many medical concerns. We have a better chance of experiencing a good outcome if medical professionals know our medical history.

Most smart phones have a health app icon on their screen that allows you to enter your doctors, medications, medical history, allergies, blood type, emergency contact and any other information you believe is necessary for medical professionals to know about your health. If you cannot find it, type "health" in the search function. The iPhone app has a little "heart."

Click on MED ID and you can type in all your information, and even enter a photo. This App does a number of other things, like count your steps, measure your blood pressure, and record your sleep, etc.

Medical experts can access these smart phone apps without a password. They know to look in the bottom left corner of the screen and click an emergency icon to see the medical information.

If you can't find a preinstalled health APP, search your app store for Medical ID or ICE for "In case of emergency."

Everyone needs to learn about this feature. I have been told that emergency personnel and paramedics

are aware of this app and look for a phone right away when a person is unconscious. Another great benefit of using this app; even if I'm not unconscious I might forget something important like my allergies, but the app won't!

My Medical ID is easy to retrieve and available at my fingertips! I also carry written information about my meds and my doctors in my wallet.

This is easier to hand off to a medical professional to make a copy. A Medical Identification bracelet or necklace is also a good idea; I just have never liked wearing them.

If you use this app, make sure to tell your friends and family so they can pass along important information if you can't.

Everyday technology is changing, and more apps are becoming available for health management. Make sure you understand the privacy aspect of any app you decide to download. Personally, to have vital medical facts easily accessible in any situation, I don't mind that I've lost some privacy about my health, as I believe the benefits outweigh the risks.

Medical ID lets you create an emergency card that allows first responders to access your critical medical information from the Lock screen, without needing your passcode.



*Lori Hartwell, Founder & President of Renal Support Network (RSN), was diagnosed with kidney disease at the age of two. In 1993 she founded RSN to instill "health, happiness, and hope" into the lives of those affected by chronic kidney disease. Lori is also the author of the inspirational book **Chronically Happy: Joyful Living in Spite of Chronic Illness** and is a four-time kidney transplant recipient.*