



# Calgary donor gives sister the gift of a lifetime

BY DAMIEN WOOD ,CALGARY SUN

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Norm Price (L) and his sister Lisa Price are pictured at the Special Services building near the Foothills Medical Centre August 4, 2012. Norm donated one of his kidneys to Lisa who suffers from a rare disorder. JIM WELLS/CALGARY SUN

First thing after her kidney transplant, Lisa Price crawled into a hospital bed with her brother, hugged him and thanked him for the gift he'd given.

Tuesday at Foothills Hospital marked the end of Lisa's four-year stretch on dialysis after losing her second kidney to cancer — the result of a rare genetic condition called Von Hippel-Lindau.

The 40-year-old Medicine Hat woman lost her first kidney to VHL-caused cancer in 1999, and also suffered a brain tumour in 2005.

Her 42-year-old Calgarian brother gave her a shot at a normal life, Lisa said, after donating one of his own kidneys.

“It’s the greatest gift somebody could give,” she said.

“As soon as you start dialysis, everything is taken from you — you’re just tied to a machine three days a week.”

In 1999, Norm told her if she ever got to the point where she needed a transplant, he wanted to be the one.

When he felt his sister wrap her arms around him, he choked up, Norm said — when he turned to look at her, she already had her colour back after years of living with a complexion gone grey.

This wasn’t the same woman he said seemed so close to giving up, facing a seven-year waiting list if the organ came from a cadaver instead.

He’s glad he did it.

This was his first experience undergoing major surgery.

“I’m feeling better day by day — I was taking a lot of painkillers at first, for those first few days, but I’m starting to wean a little bit off of it now,” Norm said.

“It doesn’t feel like I had an internal organ removed.”

The siblings’ mom, Cheryl Moat, came out from Saskatchewan to be with her kids.

“Lisa has gone through so much ... she’s crashed so many times and she’s really had a difficult time,” Cheryl said.

VHL runs in the family, on Lisa’s dad’s side — Herbert Price died at age 32 from complications, Cheryl explained, as did eight of his 13 siblings.


Lisa’s daughter, 22-year-old Sarah Price, also has it, losing an eye a year ago and suffering complications in the other.

While her new kidney won’t take the VHL away, it does buy Lisa time she might not otherwise have.

“I think more people should (donate organs), and also that there should be more awareness about it ... you can give somebody a new chance, a new beginning,” she said.

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