



Dr. Nadine Benador: Cultivating a Place of Healing

"The French believe that food is to be cherished and sharing it with others is a key part of any meal. As someone who was born in Paris and grew up in Geneva, Switzerland, good, locally-sourced food has always been an important part of my life. Eating healthy to stay healthy is why I grow my own organic vegetables, like tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchinis and kale; tending the seedlings until they mature makes me happy!"

"For more than 25 years, I've had the privilege of nurturing kids from babies to young adults by providing them with the best possible care to ensure that they can live a healthy life. **I am Team Rady** exemplifies our culture of cultivating a place of healing where kids can grow and thrive. The positive atmosphere at Rady Children's and its friendly environment make it a pleasure to work here and interact with colleagues every day."

As the director of the Pediatric Dialysis and Apheresis Programs, Dr. Benador works with an "amazing, talented team of physicians, nurses, dietitians, social workers, pharmacists and child life specialists, who are dynamic and energized. I've known many of these people for years and we have become friends. We all share the same passion for helping children and their families get better and successfully manage living with a serious medical condition."

Since long-term care and follow-up are essential for patients with chronic kidney disease, Dr. Benador has watched many of her patients transition into adulthood and feels that "these kids are like my own kids, like I have this really big family."

Dr. Benador is most proud of her recent work involving the use of B-type natriuretic peptide (BNP), a hormone secreted by the heart that is typically used in adults as a marker of heart failure. "When neonates are on kidney replacement therapy, specifically dialysis, it can be challenging to assess their fluid status and determine the daily fluid removal prescription. Standard tests, like BP and weight, are difficult to obtain because babies move and cry. By using BNP, we found that we now have an objective, timely and reliable index of volume status for potential future use in the pediatric dialysis patient." Results from the single case study were published in the April, 2023 issue of *Pediatric Nephrology* in the article titled "Assessment of fluid status in neonatal dialysis: the need for new tools."

Each year, Dr. Benador volunteers at The Painted Turtle, a camp offering a life-changing environment and authentic camp experience for children with chronic and life-threatening illnesses. “I assist with the dialysis for the kids who need it, and then they can have fun doing other typical activities, like arts and crafts, canoeing and horseback riding. The camp allows them to enjoy a few days of a normal life without their parents. I feel like I get just as much enjoyment out of it as the kids!”

“I have known that I wanted to be a doctor since I was eight years old and was drawn to pediatric nephrology. When I am training the fellows, residents and medical students, I tell them that they must really love the work that they do because this can be a hard specialty. But the reward is that these kids will be like seeds that you water and help grow over time, and along the way they become like family.”