

Preparing for a Kidney Transplant

Frequently Asked Questions



How do I find out if I am a candidate for a kidney transplant?

The best way to find out if you are a candidate is to go to an evaluation appointment at your local transplant center. If you are interested in transplant, you can refer yourself to most transplant centers. Talk to your kidney doctor (nephrologist), nurse practitioner or dialysis staff if you would like more information on transplant.

What is involved in the transplant evaluation process?

Your initial meeting with the transplant team may take four to seven hours, depending on differences between transplant center protocols. The meeting may include:

- Blood work to determine your blood and tissue type (5 or more tubes of blood)
- A meeting with the pre-transplant coordinator (generally a nurse)
- A meeting with the social worker and financial counselor to make sure you are emotionally able to deal with the transplant process and to make certain that financial resources are available
- A detailed review of your medical history
- An examination by the transplant surgeon

When will I find out if I am accepted as a transplant candidate?

Soon after your initial evaluation, you and your nephrologist will receive a letter that will let you know if you are a potential candidate for transplant. In some cases, based on your medical history, having a transplant might not be an option for you.

What if I am told that I am a transplant candidate and should proceed with the transplant workup?

Further tests will be ordered and may be listed on your preliminary acceptance letter. They may include:

- Chest X-ray and EKG
- Additional blood work
- Gallbladder ultrasound
- Mammogram (female)
- Test for prostate cancer (male)
- Dental exam

How long does it take to complete the transplant workup process?

These tests are extremely important and generally take three to six months to complete. The team at the transplant center may request that all testing be done at their facility, or they might allow you to have the tests done at an alternate site (which may be closer to your home). When all of the results are reviewed by the transplant team, you will then get the final acceptance letter and your name will be added to the waiting list. In some health situations, transplant might be considered too risky and be denied by the transplant team.

How long will I have to wait for a transplant?

It is not possible to predict waiting time. Waiting time varies between regions. In general, the average waiting time for a deceased donor kidney is two to five years (five or more years in our area currently). In some cases, a perfect match may become available and the waiting time would be less. If a living donor is available, the transplant would occur as soon as the donor completes a series of tests to establish good health and then the actual surgery date is coordinated. Living donation is your best option and you should tell people around you that you are on dialysis and in need of a kidney. You never know who may offer to donate.

Where is the new kidney implanted?

The kidney will be placed in your lower abdomen. The artery and vein of the donor kidney are connected to a main artery and vein of your lower extremities. It is placed in the front so that it is an easier surgery and to make the kidney easily accessible if further testing (biopsy) is required.



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