



Speaking Up and Asking Questions

Talk to your doctor, dialysis team, family, friends, and someone who's had a transplant. If you are healthy enough and you meet transplant requirements, a kidney transplant is a better treatment than dialysis. If you do not meet transplant requirements at one facility, ask why and apply to another. Requirements vary from facility to facility.

Get Evaluated

Your dialysis team can help you make an evaluation appointment. Bring a friend or family member along. You'll meet with a transplant doctor, nurse, social worker, and dietitian. Keep booklets or pamphlets for reference after your visit.

Identify Living Donors

You don't need to have a living donor to be placed on the transplant waiting list, but a living donor kidney can shorten your wait time and can work longer than one from a deceased donor. If you're uncomfortable approaching potential donors, friends and family can help by being your "donor champions" and spreading the word about your need for a transplant. Let potential donors know to contact your transplant center directly for more information on how they can help. Your transplant center can help your living donor apply for help with travel costs, food, and lodging.

Helpful Resources

United Network for Organ Sharing

Phone: 888.894.6361

Website: www.unos.org

National Kidney Foundation

Phone: 855.653.2273

Website: www.kidney.org

Coalition on Donation

Phone: 800.782.4920

Website: www.shareyourlife.org

American Kidney Fund

Phone: 800.638.8299

Website: www.kidneyfund.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Phone: 800.950.6264

Website: www.nami.org

Patients are encouraged to talk to a transplant recipient about their experience.



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The Road to Transplant

Tips to Consider if You're Thinking About Receiving a Kidney Transplant



Ask about Expanded Criteria Donor Kidneys

Expanded criteria donor (ECD) kidneys are transplantable deceased donor kidneys whose function is not ideal but can provide renal function to individuals who may not otherwise be qualified to be transplanted. The life expectancy of an ECD kidney is six to eight years.

Get on Multiple Waiting Lists

Being on more than one wait list can increase your chances of being matched with a donor. That's because different transplant facilities use different criteria to match you to donors. Discuss the benefits of wait listing with more than one facility with your doctor and transplant coordinator.

Ask for Help

Your dialysis team can help you with:

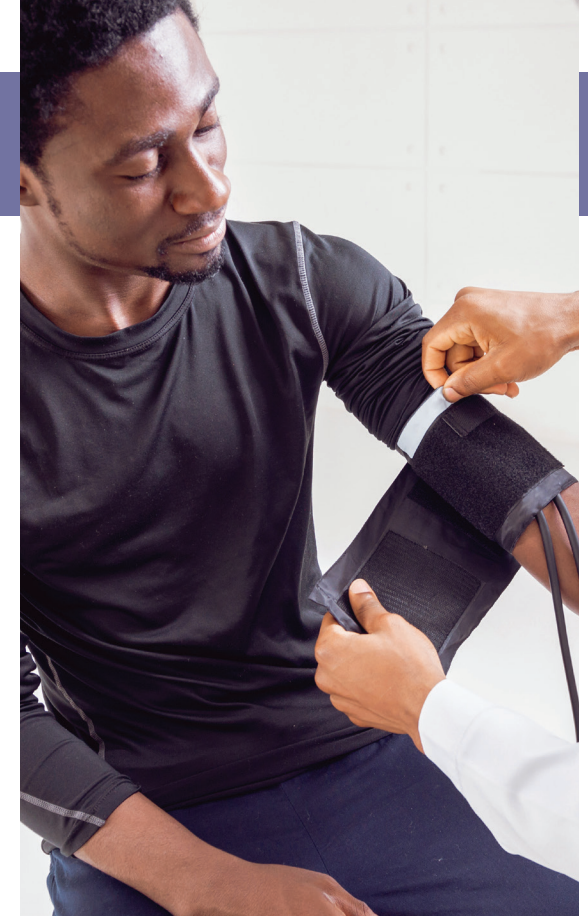
- Making appointments for your evaluation or for other tests you may need.
- Forwarding copies of your medical records to the transplant center, with your permission, especially for your first appointment.
- Helping you reach and maintain good health and body weight.
- Communicating with your transplant team.

Be Timely with Testing

At the time of your evaluation visit, the transplant team will establish a goal for when your testing should be completed. Make sure you keep to that timeline because any delay in testing could impact your being added to the waitlist. Even if you are an acceptable candidate, the transplant center may require additional medical testing that could include blood work, heart tests, and screenings to make sure you don't have cancer. Remember to always keep copies of your test results. If you stick to the testing timeline and the transplant team finds your test results, health, insurance, and compliance with your dialysis treatments to be satisfactory, you may be listed. If your test results are not good, or you do not comply with your dialysis treatments and medications, you may not be listed. Either way you will be notified in writing of the transplant center's decision and your options.

Stay in Touch, Stay Healthy

Stay in touch with your transplant coordinator. He or she can keep you updated about your status on the transplant list and answer questions related to kidney transplant. While you're waiting, remember that it's important to be in the best health condition possible before your transplant surgery. Being physically ready will improve your chances for a good result and reduce your risk for surgical complications.



The Transplant Team Can:

- Tell you about the tests you will need.
- Help you with making appointments for your tests.
- Inform you about how a kidney transplant will affect your money situation.
- Assist you with understanding how a kidney transplant will help you and how you may feel throughout the process.
- Tell you what to do if your health or financial situation changes.
- Explain how the waiting list works.
- Let you know what your rights and responsibilities are once you are listed.