



## What Is a Kidney Transplant?

**Kidney transplantation is surgery to give someone a new kidney. The new kidney takes over the work that the failed kidney cannot do.**



*The person getting the new kidney is called the **recipient**.*



*The person giving the new kidney is called the **donor**.*

A transplant is not an option for everyone. To be a candidate for transplant, a person has to be healthy enough to have the surgery. The person also must be able to take the medicines that will help his or her body to accept the new kidney.

The person's kidney doctor and social worker will help him or her get a referral to see a transplant team. A person can self-refer himself/herself. That means the person calls the transplant center directly to ask to be seen by the transplant team.

The transplant team will meet with the person to share information. They will discuss the waitlist, tests that need to be done, and what will happen after the transplant. The transplant team will answer questions and describe the next steps.



**Kidney doctor = nephrologist**

Other things to carefully think about when deciding on a kidney transplant include:

- Getting better after surgery.
- Possible rejection of the kidney.
- Side effects of medicines that keep the body from rejecting the kidney.
- Possible added medical costs.

A kidney transplant is only one treatment option. It is not a total cure for kidney failure. It does not cure kidney disease. If a person has a chronic illness that caused kidney failure, like high blood pressure or diabetes, having a transplanted kidney may not cure the illness. If you cannot have a kidney transplant or if you do not want to have one, there are other treatments that may fit your lifestyle.

**To learn more about transplant centers near you, talk to the social worker on your healthcare team.**



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