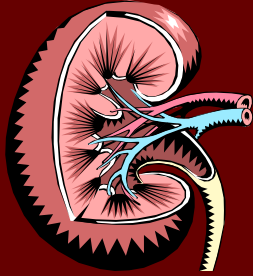


Preparing for a Kidney Transplant/ Frequently Asked Questions



ORGAN PROCUREMENT/TRANSPLANTATION COMMITTEE

This material was prepared by ESRD Network 4, Inc. under Contract #HHSM-500-2006-NW004C with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.

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Network 4 Publication Number: pbb-000-052009

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

Express your interest in exploring the option of transplantation with your nephrologist (kidney doctor). There may be slight variations among dialysis centers and physician practice; however, most nephrologists will refer you to a transplant center for an evaluation.

What is involved in the transplant evaluation process?

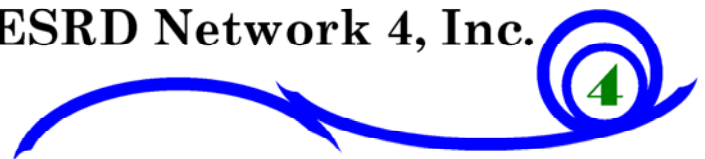
Your initial meeting with the transplant team may take four to seven hours depending on differences between transplant center protocols:

- 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.

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Kidney Transplant Questions

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

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 (females)
- test for prostate cancer (males)
- dental examination

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 transplant center might request that all testing be done at their center, or they might allow you to have them 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 of the country. The general average waiting time for a cadaveric kidney is two to five years. In some cases a perfect match may become available and the waiting time would be lessened. If a living donor is available, the transplant would occur as soon as the donor completes a series of tests to assure good health and then the actual surgery date is coordinated.

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.

Where do kidneys for transplant come from?

There are two sources but several options:

1. Living donors -- a relative, spouse or friend

Paired Donor Program -- allows individuals who wish to give a kidney to their loved one, but cannot because they are incompatible (don't match). The donor and recipient are matched with another incompatible donor and recipient pair and the kidneys are exchanged between the pairs.

Altruistic Donor Program -- a person donates his/her kidney to help someone on the general kidney transplant waiting list.

Designated -- person has chosen a recipient

Non-designated -- person has not chosen any specific recipient

2. Cadaver donor -- a person who has recently been determined brain dead and permission has been given to use his/her organs for transplant.

How long will surgery take?

The operation generally takes between two to four hours.

How long will I have to stay in the hospital?

Admission time varies with a range from three to seven days depending on the center's policy and the person's readiness for discharge.

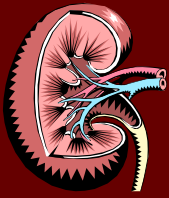
What types of medication will I have to take after the transplant?

Again, transplant centers vary. Most use a combination of three anti-rejection medications (to prevent rejection of the foreign organ); other medications are used initially and reduced gradually. Discuss the specifics of medications with your transplant team, as this will be an extremely important part of your long-term care.

How can I learn more about transplantation?

The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) has a toll free number with free information available. The number is 1-800/622-9010. You may go to their webpage at www.kidney.org.

Transplant Centers in



There are 19 transplant centers in Network 4. The website address is also included so that you may review their site for questions regarding kidney transplantation.

Albert Einstein Medical Center
Philadelphia, PA
215/456-6933
www.einstein.edu

Alfred I. duPont Institute
Wilmington, DE
302/651-4888
www.duponthospital.org

Allegheny General Hospital
Pittsburgh, PA
412/359-6800
www.wpahs.org

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA
1-800-TRY-CHOP
www.chop.edu

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA
412/692-6110
www.chp.edu

Christiana Care Health System
Newark, DE
302/623-3866
www.christianacare.org

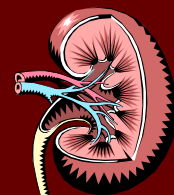
Geisinger Health System Transplant Center
Danville, PA
570/271-6214
www.geisinger.org/services/transplant

Geisinger Wyoming Valley Transplant Center
Wilkes-Barre, PA
570/819-5590
www.geisinger.org/services/transplant

Hahnemann University Hospital
Philadelphia, PA
215/762-1857
www.hahnemannhospital.com

Lankenau Hospital
Wynnewood, PA
610/645-8485
www.mainlinehealth.org/lh

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Lehigh Valley Hospital
Allentown, PA
610/402-8506
www.lvhn.org

M.S. Hershey Medical Center
Hershey, PA
1-800-525-5395
www.hmc.psu.edu

Pinnacle Health
Harrisburg, PA
1-877-778-6110
www.pinnaclehealth.org

St. Christopher's Hospital for Children
Philadelphia, PA
215/427-5190
www.stchristophershospital.com

Temple University Hospital
Philadelphia, PA
215/707-8889
www.health.temple.edu/

Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute at
UPMC
Pittsburgh, PA
1-877-640-6746
www.sti.upmc.edu

Thomas Jefferson University Hospital
Philadelphia, PA
215/955-7625
jeffersonhospital.org

University of Pennsylvania Health System
Penn Transplant Institute
Philadelphia, PA
1-800-458-2548
www.health.upenn.edu

VA of Pittsburgh Healthcare System
Pittsburgh, PA
412/360-6155
www.va.gov/pittsburgh

Kidney Donor Questions

What is Living Organ donation?

Living donation takes place when a living person donates an organ (such as the kidney) for transplantation to another person. The living donor can be a family member, such as a parent, child, brother or sister (living related donation).

Living donation can also come from someone who is emotionally related to the recipient, such as a good friend, spouse or an in-law (living unrelated donation).

In some cases, living donation may even be from a stranger (see the question “Where do kidneys come from” in the Kidney Transplant Questions section of this document).

Who can be a Living Organ Donor?

Anyone at least 18 years of age, in good health and has a desire to help others can be a living organ donor. The transplant evaluation team would determine eligible candidates based on health history.

What type of surgery is involved for the person donating his or her kidney?

Traditional surgery - An incision is made in the donor’s side to remove the kidney. The advantage to this procedure is that it takes less time to perform than laparoscopic surgery.

Laparoscopic surgery - This procedure requires four small incisions in the donor’s abdomen. It involves less surgical scars and a shorter recovery period after kidney removal.

Are kidney transplants from living donors always successful?

Although transplantation is highly successful, and success rates continue to improve, problems may occur. Sometimes, the kidney is lost to rejection, surgical complications or the original disease that caused the recipient’s kidneys to fail. Talk to the transplant center staff about their success rates and the national success rates.

What are the advantages of living donation over nonliving donation?

Transplants performed from living donors have several advantages compared to transplants performed from nonliving donors (individuals who have been declared brain dead and their families have made the decision to donate their organs).

Some living donor transplants are done between family members who are genetically similar. A better genetic match lessens the risk of rejection.

A kidney from a living donor usually functions immediately, making it easier to monitor. Some nonliving donor kidneys do not function immediately and as a result, the patient may require dialysis until the kidney starts to function.

Potential donors can be tested ahead of time to find the donor who is most compatible with the recipient. The transplant can take place at a time convenient for both donor and recipient.

Where can I find statistics related to kidney donation?

You can find some statistics on the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) website. UNOS compiles statistics on every transplant center in the United States. Go to <http://www.unos.org> to view all UNOS data. You can find statistics on the number of nonliving and living donor transplants performed at a particular transplant hospital.

Can a person live normally after donating a kidney?

People usually have two kidneys, and one is all that is needed to live a normal life.

How long is the stay in the hospital after kidney donation?

Admission time varies with a range from three to seven days depending on the center's policy and the person's readiness for discharge. A kidney donor can usually expect to return to work and normal activities in about four weeks. You will have a post-operative appointment with your surgeon 1-2 weeks after the surgery.

Kidney Donation / Frequently Asked Questions

Who pays for the kidney donor's hospital costs?

The transplant recipient's health insurance generally covers the costs for the kidney donor. The transplant center can answer specific billing and financial questions. All non-medical expenses such as lost wages, child care, travel costs and daily living expenses that are incurred during the donation process are NOT covered. Therefore, it is important for donors to consider the financial impact of these possible expenses.

How would someone donate a kidney?

There is a living donor program that offers different ways for living donors to donate. You can donate to someone you know or to a non-designated person (see the question "Where do kidneys for transplant come from?" in the Kidney Transplant Questions section of this document).

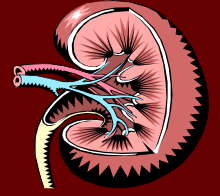
You can contact your Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) for help. OPOs are federally designated, not for profit organizations that work with hospitals throughout the country to provide the organs for transplantation. There are two OPOs in Network 4:

Center for Organ Recovery & Education (CORE)

RIDC Park
204 Sigma Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
1-800/366-6777
www.core.org

Gift of Life Donor Program

401 North Third Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
1-800/543-6391
www.donors1.org



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Data Director, ESRD Network 4, Inc. | Edited & Revised by ESRD Network 4, Inc. - May 2009

This and other patient education resources can be found on our website: www.esrdnetwork4.org