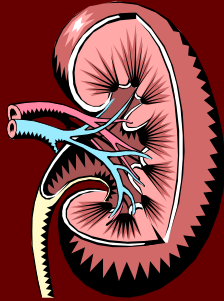


This material was prepared by ESRD Network 4, Inc. under Contract #HHSM-500-2006-NW004C with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.

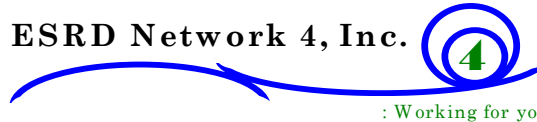
ESRD Network 4, Inc.
40 24th Street, Suite 410
The Crane Building
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412/325-2250

Toll Free Line for Patients Only: 1-800/548-9205

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ESRD Network 4, Inc.



: Working for you

PREPARING FOR A KIDNEY TRANSPLANT/ FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

Answer: Express your interest in exploring the option of transplant with your nephrologists (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.

Question: What is involved in the transplant evaluation process?

Answer: 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

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

Answer: 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.

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

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

- ◆ chest X-ray and EKG
- ◆ additional blood work
- ◆ gallbladder ultrasound
- ◆ mammogram (females)
- ◆ test for prostate cancer (males)
- ◆ dental examination

Preparing for a Kidney Transplant/Frequently Asked Cont'd

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

Answer: 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 alternative 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 to be a risk and denied by the transplant team.

Question: Where do kidneys for transplant come from?

Answer: There are three sources:

1. Living donors—a relative, spouse or friend
2. Cadaver donor—a person who has recently been determined brain dead and permission has been given to use his/her organs for transplant
3. Non-designated donation—with no specific recipient in mind, a person donates his/her kidney to help someone on the general kidney transplant waiting list

Question: How long will I have to wait for a transplant?

Answer: 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 when the actual surgery date is coordinated.

Question: Where is the new kidney implanted?

Answer: The kidney will be placed in your lower abdomen and connected up to the main artery that supplies blood to your bladder and your leg. 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.

Question: How long will surgery take?

Answer: The operation generally takes between two to four hours.

Question: How long will I have to stay in the hospital?

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

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

Answer: 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.

Question: How can I learn more about transplantation?

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

Submitted by: Cate Lewis, Patient Representative, OP/TC

Getting Ready for a Transplant

Why kidney transplantation?

Kidney transplantation is accepted as the preferred treatment for many people with kidney failure. Transplantation has many advantages such as a lifestyle free from dialysis and fewer fluid and dietary restrictions. Kidney transplant, when successful, usually provides a better quality of life for most people and is less expensive than dialysis in the long run.

How will I decide if a kidney transplant is right for me?

There are many things to consider before deciding to get a kidney transplant. Your transplant center will discuss these issues at the time of your evaluation. Some of these include: the risks and benefits of transplant, medications and their side effects, financial coverage and your ability to continue necessary follow-up care and to follow directions. The final decision is up to you so you will need to ask questions at your evaluation in order to be comfortable with your final choice.

What type of kidney transplant is available for me?

There are three sources of kidney donation—a living donor (usually a close relative), a cadaver donor (someone who dies and donates their organs), or non-designated donor (someone who does not designate a specific recipient). Living donation is usually preferred because the success rate is higher (better than 90% for the first year), the recipient requires less anti-rejection medication, and it is possible to plan when the transplant will take place. Those who do not have a living donor (most cases) can be placed on a transplant waiting list. The waiting time will vary depending on when a cadaver kidney becomes available. The success rate for cadaver transplantation is about 80% for the first year.

Which patients are candidates for transplant?

Many people with kidney failure are suitable candidates for transplant. To get a kidney transplant, you must be healthy enough to have the surgery and be free from cancer and infection. You must also be able to comply with the medications and follow-up treatments.

What is involved in being evaluated for a transplant?

Anyone interested in transplantation needs to meet with a transplant surgeon to learn more about risks and benefits of transplantation. They will also meet with a transplant coordinator at the transplant center to discuss pre-transplant preparation and follow-up care after the transplant. A tour of the transplant unit is provided and often you will have an opportunity to talk to a recent transplant recipient. The initial interview takes about an hour but can be longer if necessary. If there are specific insurance concerns, a meeting with the transplant social worker can be arranged.

NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION—Kidney and Urology Facts

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT KIDNEY DISEASE ON THE KIDNEY QUIZ

1. How many kidneys do most bodies have? a) two; b) three; c) four
2. How big are your kidneys? a) about the size of your head; b) about the size of your fist; c) about the size of your eye.
3. Where are your kidneys? a) in your back, just below your rib cage; b) in your back, behind lungs; c) by your belly button
4. Which of the following are main functions of your kidney? a) to get rid of waste and extra fluid; b) to clean the blood c) to keep your blood pressure normal; d) all of the above
5. Who can get kidney disease? a) children; b) adults/teens; c) anyone, at any age
6. What happens if your kidneys stop working? a) you go on dialysis; b) you need a kidney transplant; c) nothing; d) either the first or second option
7. What can you do to keep your kidneys healthy? a) drink plenty of water—8 glasses a day; b) watch your blood pressure; c) eat healthy & exercise; d) all of the above

Answers: 1-a,2-b,3-b,4-d, 5-c, 6-d, 7-d