

# Kidney Transplantation



The kidney transplant procedure involves taking a healthy kidney from one individual and placing it into someone whose kidneys have failed. Transplantation is not a cure for kidney disease but it is an alternative treatment that will keep you from having to come to the clinic three times a week or doing dialysis at home.



## What is The Process?

*There is a three step process for kidney transplantation:*

1. Your nephrologist will refer you to a transplant program, if you meet specific criteria.
2. The transplant program will evaluate you to see if you are a good candidate for a kidney transplant.

Over a period of weeks to months, you will go through a number of tests to determine whether it is safe for you to have the kidney transplant surgery and whether you will do well after the kidney transplant.

3. You may receive a kidney from a family member or friend willing to donate a kidney. If you have a someone willing to donate a kidney, the time it takes to be transplanted will be shorter and this kidney is more likely to work well. The transplant center will also evaluate your donor.

**OR** You will be placed on a transplant waiting list to await a kidney from a deceased donor. It can take several years for you to receive a kidney after being placed on a deceased donor transplant list.

## Why Would I Want a Transplant?

If you get a kidney transplant, you likely will have a better quality of life, live longer, and be less likely to be hospitalized than if you are on dialysis. In addition, you will not need to get dialysis three days a week.

*If you have a successful kidney transplant:*

- You do not have to do dialysis.
- You will feel healthier and have more energy than if you were on dialysis.
- You will have fewer fluid and diet restrictions than when you are on dialysis.
- You can work full time without having to worry about your dialysis schedule.
- You will have fewer visits to see your nephrologist.



## How Long Do I Have to Wait on the Kidney Transplant List?

If you have a family member or friend willing to donate a kidney, you can have a kidney transplant as quickly as six months.

If you are on a deceased donor kidney transplant wait list, your wait can be months or years. The average wait varies by region but is typically 3-5 years.

While you are waiting for a kidney transplant, you will need to continue dialysis. The best thing you can do while you wait is to stay healthy, follow your dialysis prescription and avoid blood transfusions.

## What About The Transplant Surgery?

1. If a kidney becomes available for you, you will be called in for surgery. Highly trained transplant surgeons will put the healthy kidney in your abdominal cavity.
2. The transplanted kidney may start working right away or it may take a few weeks to make urine.
3. Your old kidneys are left in place unless they are causing infection or uncontrollable high blood pressure.
4. The average hospital stay is 5-10 days after the transplant.

## What Are Common Challenges of Kidney Transplant?

1. You may have to wait a long time before you get a kidney transplant.
2. You will require surgery to get a kidney transplant.
3. You will have to take kidney transplant medications every day for as long as you have the kidney so that it will continue to work properly.
4. You may experience side effects from the kidney transplant medications.
5. Your kidney transplant medications can be expensive.
6. Your kidney transplant may not last a lifetime.
7. Your body could reject the kidney.
8. You will need to receive dialysis treatments if your body rejects the kidney.

*Most nephrologists believe that with a successful transplant, you will be most likely to live the life you want to live. If you are interested in a kidney transplant, talk to your nephrologist.*

120D-08C-0114