

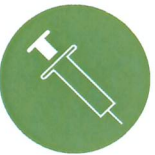
Things to Know Before Your Transplant



1. What is an organ transplant?

An organ transplant is a surgical procedure to replace a failing organ with a healthy one.

A transplant surgeon will remove an organ from another person who has agreed to be a donor, and place it in your body. This may be done when one of your organs has stopped working, is not working well because of disease or injury, or cannot be treated by any other medicines or surgeries. The transplanted organ takes over the function of the damaged organ.



2. How do I prepare for an organ transplant?

There may be a lot of preparation and waiting when it comes to an organ transplant. In order to determine your eligibility, your transplant team may evaluate your medical history, current health status, financial situation, and caregiver and/or support system.

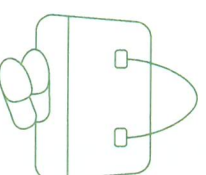
Anyone who needs an organ transplant may have a number of different tests before they receive the transplant. These tests help your transplant team decide if a transplant is right for you and decide how to improve your chances of getting the best results from your transplant. Some of the first tests you will have done are to see what blood and tissue type you are. They will be used to match you with a potential donor. The more similar your blood and tissues are to your donor's, the more likely it is that your body will accept the donor organ.

It's a good idea to take care of your health. You should try to continue to take your medicines as prescribed and get regular blood tests. Remember to consult your doctor or other members of your transplant team for advice on eating and exercising.

The availability of an organ for a transplant may be unpredictable. If you are on the waiting list for an organ transplant, you may be called at any time with news that a potential donor has been found who may be a match for you. While you are waiting for your organ transplant, you may be given a pager or cell phone so the transplant center can contact you to tell you an organ is available. **You should try to always keep your pager with you.** You may also wish to give the transplant center several numbers where you can be reached and the name and number of a few people who will always know how to reach you.

Try to arrange for someone to go with you to the transplant center when you have the transplant. This person may support you and help you remember your doctor's instructions. This person may also be able to report any change in symptoms that you may have before or after the transplant. **It may be helpful to have someone who can be there to check in on you** during your stay in the hospital and during your recovery at home.

Having your suitcase packed with the things you need to take with you to the transplant center is a good idea. Your support person may also have a bag packed and ready to go. You never know when you will receive the call that your organ is available.



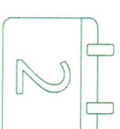
The contents of this tool are not intended for the purpose of disease diagnosis or as a substitute for information that is provided to you by your transplant team. You should always discuss your individual symptoms and any questions you may have with your transplant team. Always consult your transplant team before making any changes to your lifestyle, such as changing your diet or exercise plan, or before changing your medicine routine.



3. How do I get referred for an organ transplant?

It is important to learn as much as you can about the transplant center where you are considering having your transplant procedure. You may want to find out whether the center will accept your insurance, what your options are if you don't have insurance, and whether support groups are available. Try to ask a lot of questions so that you can decide if the transplant center is right for you.

- **Get a referral** from your doctor
- **Call the transplant center** where you choose to have your transplant. To locate a transplant center, ask your doctor or contact the United Network for Organ Sharing at www.unos.org or 1-888-894-6361
- **Make an appointment** for an evaluation at the transplant center. Your transplant center can perform all of the required tests. Your doctor can order the tests and send the results to the center



The transplant center should notify you to let you know whether you have been placed on the waiting list. If you have questions, be sure to contact the transplant center and speak to a member of your transplant team. It may be a while before you receive the call to tell you that a potential donor has been found who may be a match for you. Your transplant team should consider whether the donor is a good match for you, the status of your current health, and how long you've been on the waiting list. Your team may also consider the geographical location of the donated organ.



4. What if I am not a good candidate for organ transplant?

Not everyone is a candidate for an organ transplant. Check with your transplant center about the things that might stop you from being considered for an organ transplant. Some diseases and/or medical conditions may prevent you from receiving a transplant. These include:

- Certain types of liver, heart, or lung disease
- Some cancers
- Use of alcohol or drug abuse
- Being HIV-positive
- History of not following medical instructions

If you aren't eligible for an organ transplant, **talk to your doctor about what other options may be available for you.**



5. What should I know before having an organ transplant?

Your body has a natural way of protecting itself from things it identifies to be foreign, such as harmful bacteria and viruses, using its defense system (the immune system). Since your transplanted organ is not your own, your body will recognize this as being foreign and activate your immune system. After your transplant (and sometimes before), you will be prescribed anti-rejection or immunosuppressive medicines to calm (or suppress) your immune system to help prevent it from attacking your transplanted organ.

It is important that you take your medicines exactly as prescribed by your doctor and have regular follow-up tests. You may need to make some lifestyle changes in order to stay healthy. It is important that you talk to your transplant team for advice and before making any changes to your everyday routine.



6. How can my loved ones prepare?

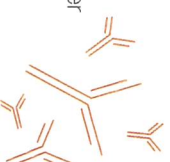
There are many ways your loved ones may support you, both during and after your transplant. **It may help to have at least one support person** stay at the transplant center with you. He or she should have a suitcase packed and be ready to go to the transplant center with you when you get the call that your organ is available. Your support person may write down and ask the transplant team questions you may have during and after your transplant.



7. What tests are possible before my transplant?

Before you can be considered for an organ transplant, **you may need to have a number of different tests** to find out whether you are eligible. One of these tests will be to find out your tissue type. Knowing your tissue type will make it possible to match you with a donor organ. Some tests are needed for all transplant candidates, while others are needed to monitor your disease or the cause of your organ failure. **Some of the tests you will have:**

- **Crossmatch.** A test to see if there is anything in your blood that will react against the donor's cells
- **Antibody screen.** A panel-reactive antibody (PRA) test measures whether your body contains antibodies (proteins that attack foreign substances) that will react against a transplanted organ from a broad range of people. If you do, it means you may be at higher risk of rejection, even if the crossmatch shows that you and the donor are a good match
- **Blood type.** This blood test shows which type of blood you have (O, A, B, or AB). Your blood type must be compatible with the organ donor's blood type, whether receiving a living or a deceased donor organ



If your blood type is:	Your donor's blood type could be:
O	O
A	A or O
B	B or O
AB	A, B, AB, or O

- **Tissue type.** This blood test shows the genetic makeup of your body's cells. There are six antigens (genetic markers) found in your blood sample. A perfect match occurs when all six antigens match the donor

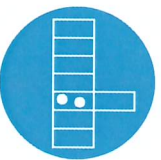
Making the decision to have an organ transplant can be a difficult one. It is important to try to learn as much as you can before you make a decision. By knowing the facts, you may be able to make a more educated decision that you feel comfortable with, now and in the future.

Don't hesitate to talk to your transplant team about any issues or concerns you may have. They are there to help you every step of the way.

Understanding Life After Organ Transplant

After your transplant, **try to take the next steps in your life carefully**. Now that your surgery is over, some things about your life may change and there is a lot to understand about things that may help you stay healthy. Be sure to ask your transplant team any questions you may have about your recovery. They are there to help you on every step of your journey.

Frequently asked questions about your life after transplant



1. How am I going to remember to take all my medicines?

Taking transplant medicines as prescribed is an important part of striving to be a healthy transplant patient. Since you may be taking more medicines than you are used to, organization and commitment will be important. It may help to **plan your medicine** schedule and review it with your transplant team. Many patients also **use a pill box** to help them remember to take every dose.



2. What can I eat?

After your transplant, it is important to try to eat a healthy diet. You may enjoy many kinds of foods but it is important to avoid eating very salty foods. **Ask your doctor, dietitian, or nutritionist for advice and to help you to plan your meals.**



3. What side effects might I have from the medicines?

Everyone reacts differently to medicine, and reactions may change over time. If you have difficulty with side effects, **your transplant team may be able to help**. Some side effects, such as infections, are more serious. Talk to your transplant team for more information about the possible side effects you may experience.



4. How can I protect myself from infections? What do I do if I get sick?

Some of the medicines you will be prescribed after your transplant are to help keep your body from rejecting your transplanted organ. Because of the way these medicines work, it is important to remember that you will be at an increased risk of developing an infection. To help protect yourself, you should try to:

- Stay aware of your environment
- Take preventative measures whenever possible – ask your transplant team for tips and advice
- Make sure you have regular checkups
- Follow your transplant team's advice carefully

If you are not feeling well, it's important to call your transplant team right away.

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5. What are the signs and symptoms of organ rejection?

Depending on the type of organ you've had transplanted, **signs and symptoms of rejection may include:**

- General weakness
- Tiredness
- Weight gain or swelling
- Lower than normal blood pressure
- Temperature of 100.5°F or higher, even if it goes away
- Pain or tenderness in the area of your transplanted organ
- Little or no urine
- Dark or tea-colored urine
- Itching
- Shortness of breath
- Yellow skin or eyes
- Flu-like symptoms such as chills, aches, headache, dizziness, nausea, or vomiting
- Palpitations (your heartbeat is abnormal or irregular)



6. When can I start being physically active again?

Every person's recovery will be different, but many patients are able to go back to some low-impact physical activity soon after surgery. **Try to take things one step at a time.** It is important that you slowly increase your workout with more demanding activities over time, and that you talk with your transplant team whenever you are considering changing or adding a new activity to your exercise routine. If you're thinking about outdoor activity, it's important to protect yourself from the sun, since immunosuppressive medicines increase your risk of skin cancer.