

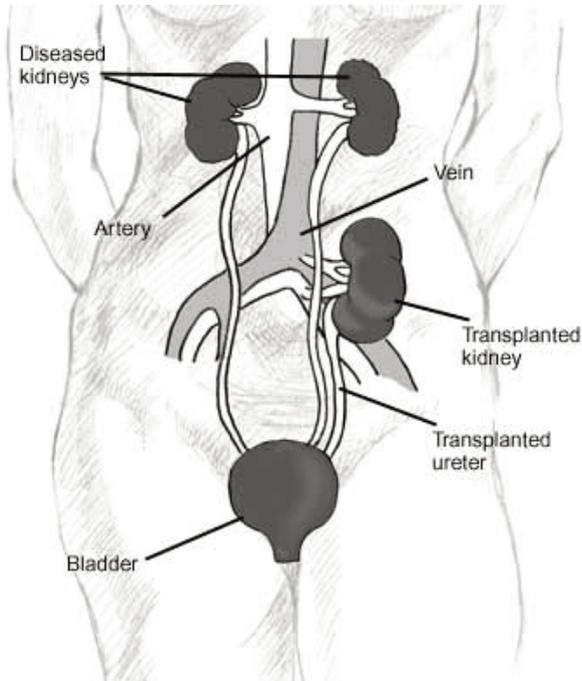
Pre-transplantation decisions and preparation

Information for renal patients



Who can have a kidney transplant?

Kidney transplantation is the preferred choice of treatment for many patients with established kidney disease. However, it may not be suitable for everyone. Some patients may either be considered unfit or have medical conditions, which may put them at an unacceptable risk to undergo surgery. Some patients may just prefer to remain on dialysis.



What are the potential benefits of a transplant?

- Better long-term health compared to dialysis
- Freedom from dialysis
- Freedom from fluid and dietary restriction
- Improved energy levels
- Improved fertility
- Ability to work and travel more freely
- Improved quality of life.

What are the potential disadvantages of a transplant?

- Risk of failure
- Risk of infection
- Risk of bleeding
- Risk of recurrence of original kidney disease
- Side effects of immunosuppressant (anti-rejection) medication.

What types of kidney transplant are there?

- Live
- Deceased.

Live

A direct donation from one of the following:

- Related – a relation
- Unrelated – someone who is not related to you directly
- UK Living Kidney Sharing Scheme (UKLKSS) is where donated kidneys are 'shared' across the UK

The UKLKSS includes:

Altruistic Donor Chains (ADC) – donated by a person unknown to the recipient

- Paired/pooled donation (PPD) – a shared kidney organ donation scheme.

The results from a living kidney donation are usually better. Surgery can also be planned in advance and you do not have to rely on the waiting list.

Deceased

These can be divided into two donor types:

1 Donation after brain death (DBD)

This outcome is usually better because the heart still continues to beat, allowing good blood flow until the time of donation.

2 Donation after cardiac death (DCD)

These kidneys come from individuals whose heart has stopped for a period of time before the organ is donated, so there is a period of time where the kidney has no blood flow. This means there is more likely to be a delay before the donated kidney starts to work following transplantation.

Who can donate a kidney?

Anyone who is fit and well and competent to make the choice can be considered as a living donor. All living donation in the UK is regulated by the Human Tissue Authority and Human Tissue Act (HTA) 2005. This is required by law to ensure that there is no coercion or financial incentive tied to the donation.

How long does it take from start of work up to a live donation?

The average time from investigations to live donation is about 18 weeks. The transplant surgeon and the renal consultant have the right to halt the investigation process at any time if there are any changes in your medical condition which may affect your suitability to receive a transplant. The recipient and the donor also have the right to change their mind at any time.

Where will the transplant be carried out?

The investigations needed for a kidney transplant are shared between both Royal Cornwall Hospital NHS Trust and Derriford Hospital, Plymouth NHS Trust. The operation itself will be performed at the South West Transplant Centre, Derriford Hospital, Plymouth. However, if you are having a simultaneous pancreas kidney transplant, this will be undertaken at Oxford.

You will be expected to attend the South West Transplant Centre (Derriford Hospital) several times a week for the first 6-8 weeks following surgery. As long as everything is progressing well following your transplant, your care will then be transferred back to Royal Cornwall Hospital after 6-8 weeks for regular follow-up and monitoring.

You will also be expected to attend clinic sessions at Derriford Hospital (or Oxford if simultaneous pancreas and kidney) pre transplantation.

How does the transplant waiting list work?

If you are considered suitable for a kidney transplant, you will be registered on a national waiting list which is managed by NHS Blood and Transplant. This records details of your blood group and tissue type. All deceased kidney donors have their blood group and tissue type tested. These are then matched on the database and allocated to the patients who are blood group compatible with the donor and have the best tissue type match – not on a ‘first come, first served’ basis.

How do I get on the waiting list?

You will be seen by your renal consultant to assess your medical suitability for transplantation. You will then undergo a variety of tests, which could include:

- **ECG** – records the rhythm and electrical activity of your heart
- **Chest X-ray**
- **Echocardiogram** – a scan that creates images of your heart
- **Coronary angiogram** – a procedure that uses X-ray imaging to view your heart's blood vessels
- **Myocardial perfusion scan (MIBI/MPS)** – a scan that is used to assess the blood flow to your heart muscle when it is stressed by exercise or medication
- **Doppler (ultrasound test)** – a test to see how blood flows through a blood vessel. It helps doctors evaluate blood flow through major arteries and veins.

You will also have blood taken to check your blood group and tissue type for matching purposes. You will then be referred to the South West Transplant Centre at Derriford Hospital (or Oxford if simultaneous pancreas kidney transplant), where you will be asked to attend a transplant assessment clinic.

Here you will be seen by a:

- renal consultant and/or surgeon
- transplant nurse practitioner.

You will also attend a patient education seminar on kidney transplantation, where you will be able to ask questions and find out more about the whole procedure.

They will also take further blood from you to help reduce the risk of potential post transplant illness, and obtain your consent to test for the following:

- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- Hepatitis C
- Hepatitis B

- Sexually Transmitted Disease
- Epstein Barr Virus (EBV) (glandular fever)
- Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
- Chickenpox.

How long will I have to wait?

It is impossible to predict how soon a kidney will become available. It may take days or weeks, but is more likely to take months or years. The average waiting time is around eighteen months - two years. However, most people will wait much longer.

What can I do whilst I am waiting for a kidney transplant?

It is very important that you try to keep yourself as healthy as possible. This may increase your chances of success and recovery.

- Eat a healthy well balanced diet.
- Stop smoking.
- Exercise – within your limits if you are able.
- Keep us informed of up to date contact details.

Contact us

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Further information on transplantation

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0300 1232323
www.nhsbt.nhs.uk

National Kidney Federation

0800 1690936
www.kidney.org.uk

Human Tissue Authority

0207 2691900
www.hta.gov.uk

The British Transplant Society

Chester House
68 Chestergate
Macclesfield
SK11 6DY

01625 664547
www.bts.org.uk

South West Transplant Centre (Derriford Hospital)

www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk/south-west-transplant-centre

Kidney Beam

Exercise & lifestyle Management App
Designed to help people live well with kidney disease
www.kidneybeam.com

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