

Post transplant follow on care and annual reviews



A kidney transplant is a positive choice for longer term health and quality of life compared to dialysis. There are a few things you need to be aware of to help to maintain your long-term health and get the best out of your transplanted kidney.

Weight management / diabetes risks

Try to reduce your risk of developing diabetes. Symptoms may include an increased thirst, tiredness and increased frequency of urination. Maintaining a healthy weight and lifestyle following transplant may reduce this risk. Aim for a body mass index (BMI) of 18.5 to 25.

Blood pressure

Regular blood pressure monitoring and effective blood pressure control is important. Your blood pressure will be checked at each transplant clinic visit. If you have concerns about your blood pressure you can have an ambulatory blood pressure monitor fitted at your GP surgery.

Regular dental review

Immune suppression medication can increase your risk of infections and swollen gums. Regular dental check ups are strongly advised.

Cancer

Long-term use of immunosuppressant medications can increase your risk of developing certain types of cancer. Report any changes in bowel habit such as diarrhoea, constipation or blood in your stools to your GP.

Make sure that you remain up to date with routine health screening as per government guidelines including:

- bowel screening
- cervical screening
- mammograms

Regularly self-check your breasts and testes and report any abnormal lumps to your GP.

Skin cancer

- Avoid exposure to the sun during the hottest part of the day. Ensure high factor sunscreen (factor 50) is applied to all exposed areas of your skin.
- Wear a sun hat.
- Regularly self-examine your skin and report any abnormal moles or rashes to your GP.

Fractures

Immunosuppressant medication can increase your risk of fractures. You may need a routine bone density scan (DEXA scan) to see how dense or strong your bones are.

Contraception and pregnancy planning

Following transplantation your fertility will increase, so it is important to use adequate contraception to avoid unplanned pregnancies. It is vital that pregnancy planning is discussed with your transplant team to provide specific advice.

After a transplant your body will need time to heal and some of your transplant medications may need changing before considering pregnancy.

Sexual dysfunction

Sex life is usually improved following a transplant rather than on dialysis. However, medication side effects, diabetes or stress can all have an effect on sex drive. There are treatments available for men having trouble getting erections. Please speak with your GP or transplant team for advice.

Alcohol consumption

Regular alcohol consumption above the recommended guidance can raise your blood pressure and is very high in calories. It is recommended to consume no more than 14 units weekly spread over 3 or more days and to have several alcohol-free days weekly.

Smoking history

Smoking can increase your risk of certain types of cancer and may reduce the life of your transplanted kidney. It is highly advisable to stop smoking. Your GP can advise treatments that may help. NHS websites listed at the end of this leaflet can provide advice and support.

Exercise

Following your recovery from surgery, aim to achieve regular physical activity within your own limits. Some examples may include walking, swimming, or cycling. Start gently and gradually build up your exercise tolerance.

Healthy diet

Following your kidney transplant, it is important to eat a healthy diet to maintain a healthy weight.

Your diet should include:

- fruit and veg (at least 5 portions a day)
- potatoes, bread, rice and pasta (particularly whole grain)
- some milk and dairy foods, meat, fish, eggs beans and pulses.

Avoid foods containing high levels of salt, which can cause high blood pressure. Please contact your transplant nurses if you would like a referral to one of our dietitians for advice.

Vaccinations

Including:

- Pneumovax
- Influenza
- Covid
- Hep B
- holiday vaccines.

Ensure that your vaccinations are up to date. You must not have any vaccines that contain live viruses such as measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccines.

Emotional wellbeing

Having a kidney transplant can trigger lots of different emotions. If you feel depressed, anxious or stressed it is important that you speak to your GP for help. You can also contact Outlook Southwest or Kidney care UK (website listed below).

Infection

Seek medical advice if you think that you have an infection. Contact the transplant nurses on 01872 252292, your GP or NHS 111 (out of hours).

Symptoms of infection may include:

- a high temperature (38C or above)
- feeling hot / shivery
- headache
- aching muscles
- diarrhoea
- vomiting.

Useful websites

www.nhs.uk/conditions/kidney-transplant

www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking

www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight

www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active

www.nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less

www.kidneycareuk.org/get-support/counselling-and-support-service

Contact us

Emma Johns and Samantha Abbott

Tel: 01872 252292

Email: emmajohns@nhs.net
samantha.abbott5@nhs.net

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

