

# Understanding kidney transplant

For many, a kidney transplant is one of the best treatments for end-stage kidney disease. This option is closest to natural kidney function and offers benefits like an improved quality of life and better health outcomes.

## What is a kidney transplant?

A kidney transplant is a surgical procedure that places a new kidney from a donor into a person whose kidneys are no longer functioning. Advances in technology, donor matching, and surgery have greatly increased transplant success rates.

## Types of kidney donors

There are two types of donors for a kidney transplant—either living or deceased. For the transplant to be successful, you and the donor will need to have the same blood type and tissue type. A kidney from a living donor may work faster and last longer, but the overall goal is finding a match.

## Advantages of kidney transplant

Benefits of kidney transplant include:

- ✓ Freedom from dialysis
- ✓ Longer life expectancy
- ✓ Fewer diet and fluid restrictions
- ✓ More energy
- ✓ Fewer hospital admissions
- ✓ More flexibility to work, study, travel, exercise, and remain active



## Things to consider about transplant

### Your overall health

You will meet with a kidney doctor who will do an examination and discuss any additional labs, imaging, or procedures needed to determine whether you meet the health requirements for transplant.

### Choosing your transplant center

You can choose the right transplant center for you. Your care team can answer your questions and help you make the best decision.

### Your insurance options

Your care team and the transplant center will help you understand your insurance coverage options for surgery and the medications you will need after transplant. In some cases, if you are eligible, you may be encouraged to enroll in Medicare.

### Having a care partner

A care partner can help support you before, during, and after transplant. They can help with appointments, medications, monitoring your health, and overall emotional support. Many transplant centers require a care partner for at least the first couple of months after transplant.

### Timing

The wait time for a kidney donor match can vary from 3 to 15 years. It is important to get on the transplant list as early as possible, ideally well before your kidneys fail. If your transplant center decides you are a good candidate for transplant, you will be placed on the list for a deceased donor kidney. At that time, if you have identified potential living donors, the transplant center can evaluate them as well. While you wait for a donor, dialysis may be needed if your kidney function continues to worsen.

### Understanding the risk of rejection

Rejection can happen if your body recognizes your transplanted kidney as different from your original kidneys. To prevent rejection, you will have to take anti-rejection medications. Your doctor will explain these medications and their side effects.



### We are with you every step of the way.

Kidney transplant is a big decision. Your care team is here to help. Reach out to take the first step in making a transplant plan.