

Questions to Ask My Transplant Team



As you go through the transplant process, you may have questions for your transplant team. As an active part of your care team, never be afraid to ask questions about your health or transplant. Below is a list of questions to consider.

General

- Who are the members of the transplant team and what are their roles? How do I reach them if I have questions?
- What are the procedures for a multi-organ transplant? What organ team will be the primary team?
- What is the wait time for a kidney transplant? How long can I expect to wait?
- How long does an evaluation take if I have a possible living donor?
- Does the transplant program offer paired donation?
- How will I know that I am definitely on the waiting list?
- Who exactly is my follow-up care team (and for how long)?
- Does this hospital have clinical research programs in transplantation? Will I be asked to take part in research studies?
- What if I want to travel while on the waitlist?
- How long after transplant can I start to travel? What does travel after transplant look like?
- Are there any concerns about having pets after transplant?

Nephrologist

- What are the risks and benefits of receiving a kidney transplant?
- What are the risks and benefits of accepting an organ from an increased risk kidney?
- How does this medical team decide whether or not to accept a particular kidney for a patient?
- How long will my kidney survive?
- Do I have all of the vaccines required by the transplant program? Are there any additional recommended vaccines I should know about?

- What tests and other procedures will I need as part of the evaluation process?
- How often will I need to come in for appointments and testing while on the waiting list?
- What is the HLA match of my living or deceased donor organ? How strong of a match is it, and will this influence the level of immunosuppressant medication I will need after surgery?
- Is a living donor transplant a possibility for me?
- If the recipient gets called in the middle of the night, how will we know where to go?
- How does the evaluation affect whether or not I am put on the waiting list?
- What is required to stay active on the waitlist?
- Which immunosuppressant medications will I be placed on after surgery? Do I have options?
- Are there any circumstances that would require me to have dialysis treatments before or after my transplant surgery?
- How can transplant affect reproduction (having a baby)?
- Are there any anti-depressant/anti-anxiety medications I should avoid due to potential interactions with my transplant medications?
- Will I need to take and record my weight or blood pressure daily after surgery? How can I best manage weight gain/weight loss or unexpected changes in my blood pressure?
- Are there any supplies I should consider for my recovery at home?
- What sort of blood tests might I require to monitor infection and/or other long-term complications?
- Can I take supplements or herbal products after transplant? What are the recommendations? Who do I notify?
- What other medications or products impact my immunosuppressants?
- Can I have alcohol or cannabis after transplant?

Surgeon

- What is the expected recovery time after my transplant?
- In the case that I experience acute rejection after a living donor gift, what can be done to preserve my newly donated kidney?
- Will a ureteral stent be placed during my transplant surgery? If so, please provide some expectations around what I may physically feel and when/how the stent will be removed after surgery.

- What is the projected length of my hospital stay? What is required for me to be discharged?
- What is a realistic overall surgery recovery timeframe?
- How long after surgery until I can drive? Exercise? Return to work?
- How long should I wait to resume sexual activity?

Social Worker

- Are there relocation requirements before or after transplant?
- What are the travel requirements before and after transplant?
- Does the center offer in-person or telephone interpreter services?
- Does the transplant hospital offer mental health resources for transplant patients? Do they have an in-person or virtual support group?
- What are the specific requirements for caregivers?
- Are paid caregivers allowed (from an agency or a friend or relative)?
- Do I need to alert the transplant team if my primary caregiver changes at any time during my pre-surgical journey?
- What resources does my clinic offer to help educate me about life as a transplant recipient?
- What is the process for living donation?
- If a living donor is medically cleared but is not a specific blood match for me specifically, what are the next steps to coordinate a paired exchange?
- How much time would I have to get to the transplant center if a kidney became available?
- Is there a process for contacting and communicating with the donor's family?

References:

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