



## BE YOUR OWN BEST ADVOCATE A Fact Sheet for Transplant Recipients and Candidates

Transplantation can allow people to live healthy and happy lives. While it is true that some important problems are behind you once you are transplanted, many new challenges will arise. To stay healthy, one has to adapt and pay attention to the various changes to your health, while planning for and responding to them accordingly.

NKF's "People Like Us" movement brings together transplant recipients, living donors, potential donors, people with chronic kidney disease, donor families and caregivers to be empowered, educated and encouraged to be their own best advocate. Here are some suggestions from "People Like Us" advocates for helping to empower, educate and encourage themselves and others along the transplant journey:

**Join** the "People Like Us Take Action Network" at [www.kidney.org/takeaction](http://www.kidney.org/takeaction) to learn about and use your voice on donation, transplantation, and kidney-disease related public policy issues. When you join, you will receive email alerts and guidance for contacting your elected officials.

**Give and Receive** support by joining with other transplant recipients of the NKF's transAction council. [www.transplantrecipients.org](http://www.transplantrecipients.org). When you join transAction, you can post and read stories, messages, book reviews, and other transplant-related information. You can also connect with other transplant recipients and those awaiting a transplant through the NKF's Facebook page: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

**Ask** questions! Tell your health care team about your side effects and concerns and ask about procedures, risks and all options that are available to you. To help you to speak with your health care members, get free copies of NKF's free publications: *Transplantation: Living Well on Immunosuppressant Medicines*; the *Transplant Recipients' Bill of Rights and Responsibilities*; *Life After Transplant: Your Guide to Staying Healthy After Kidney Transplantation*

**Eat Well and Exercise.** Learn about nutrition, fitness and general health issues in transAction's *Transplant Chronicles* e-newsletter.  
<http://www.kidney.org/transplantation/transAction/chronicles.cfm>

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**Accept** that transplant may bring about a range of emotions, partly because of the medications and partly because of the life-changing experience. Read *Understanding Depression*: on NKF's A-Z guide: <http://www.kidney.org/atoz/atozTopic.cfm?topic=3> and call NKF for a free copy of the book *From Illness to Wellness: Life After Transplantation*

**Recognize Donors.** Call the NKF for a free copy of the brochure: *Writing to Donor Families and Living Donors: A Simple Guide for Organ or Tissue Transplant Recipients*

**Learn about insurance, finances and employment options:** <http://www.kidney.org/transplantation/transAction/resources.cfm> provides resources to help finance your specialized medical care pre and post transplant, including immunosuppressive medications. Also call NKF for the free book *Taking Control: Money Matters for People with Chronic Kidney Disease*

**Volunteer** with your local NKF office. Check [www.kidney.org/about/offices.cfm](http://www.kidney.org/about/offices.cfm) for the NKF office in your area, and ask them how you can help.

**Need more information? Contact us at:**

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