



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT **Kidney Transplantation**

When your kidneys fail, treatment is needed to replace the work your own kidneys can no longer do. There are two main types of treatment for kidney failure—dialysis and kidney transplantation. This information can help you decide if a kidney transplant is the best choice for you.



### **What is a Kidney Transplant?**

When you get a kidney transplant, a healthy kidney is placed inside your body to do the work your own kidneys can no longer do. Many people feel that a kidney transplant offers more freedom and a better quality of life than dialysis.



### **Who Can Get a Kidney Transplant?**

Kidney patients of all ages—from children to seniors—can get a transplant. You must be healthy enough to have the operation. Every person being considered for transplant will get a full medical and psychosocial evaluation to make sure they are a good candidate for transplant. The evaluation helps find any problems, so they can be corrected before transplant. For a variety of people, getting a transplant can be an option.



### **What if I'm Older or Have Health Problems?**

In many cases, people who are older or have other health conditions like diabetes can still have successful kidney transplants. Careful evaluation is needed to understand and deal with any special risks. You may be asked to do some things that can lessen certain risks and improve the chances of a successful transplant. For example, you may be asked to lose weight or quit smoking.

Depending on what caused your kidney disease, like Type 1 diabetes, the transplant team may recommend getting a kidney-pancreas transplant, called a dual transplant or simultaneous kidney-pancreas transplant (SKP.) Your transplant team will talk to you about which type of transplant is best for you.

# Getting a Transplant



## How do I start the process of getting a kidney transplant?

You can ask your healthcare provider to refer you to a transplant center for an evaluation. Or, you can reach out to a transplant center on your own to start the process, called a self-referral.



## How does the evaluation process work?

At the transplant evaluation, you'll meet with all of the members of the transplant team, including a nephrologist (kidney doctor), surgeon, nurse coordinator, dietitian and social worker. They'll talk to you about things like your medical history, including what caused your kidney disease, social support, mental wellness and diet. You'll also have some medical tests done. One thing you can do to speed up the process is to get all the testing done as quickly as possible and stay in close contact with the transplant team.

After you complete the entire evaluation, the transplant team will work together to approve you, or not, depending on what they find. The transplant center will let you know if you've been approved for the waitlist. If you're told you might not be right for a transplant, don't be afraid to ask why—or if you might be eligible at some future time or at another center.

# Where can I find more information?

Start here:  
[kidney.org/transplantation](https://www.kidney.org/transplantation)



## NKF CARES

The National Kidney Foundation offers a toll-free patient help line for people affected by kidney disease, organ donation, or kidney transplant. Patients, families, and caregivers can speak with a trained specialist who will help answer questions and listen to concerns.

## For free educational material and resources:

- > [kidney.org/treatment-support/cares](https://www.kidney.org/treatment-support/cares)
- > **855.NKF.CARES (855.653.2273)**

## NKF PEERS

Preparing for and having a kidney transplant comes with a range of questions and emotions. You can talk to a peer mentor who has been in a similar situation by contacting NKF Peers. If you are considering donating a kidney, you can be connected with a living donor.

## For more information, email or call:

- > [nkfpeers@kidney.org](mailto:nkfpeers@kidney.org)
- > **855.NKF.PEER (855.653.7337)**

## KIDNEY LEARNING CENTER

Watch short, on-line videos delivered by patients and living donors to learn about kidney disease, treatment options and how to become a living donor. You'll also find helpful next steps to guide you in your journey.

## For more information, visit:

- > [learningcenter.kidney.org](https://www.learningcenter.kidney.org)



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If someone would like to donate a kidney to you, they'll have to get evaluated with the living donor team at the transplant center. Learn more about living donation by visiting [kidney.org/becoming-a-living-donor](https://www.kidney.org/becoming-a-living-donor).

**KIDNEY.ORG**



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