



Information for
patients and
carers

Reducing cancer risk in kidney
transplant patients

Information for patients and relatives on the risk of cancer following kidney transplantation

- The risk of cancer after kidney transplantation is **slightly increased** compared to the general population
- The main cause for this increased risk is the immuno-suppression. The immune system fights infection and cancer. Therefore, immuno-suppressive drugs make you slightly more susceptible to some forms of cancer. The risk increases with time on immuno-suppressive medication
- Steps can be taken to minimize the risk and **to detect cancer early on**
- The most common form of cancer after kidney transplantation is cancer of the skin and lips. This form of cancer is related to sun exposure. You should wear appropriate clothing and use potent sunblockers (factor 50 or more). Protection of the lips is also important
- Regular self-examination of the skin is also recommended. The table on page 3 of this leaflet describes early signs and symptoms of skin cancer
- Other forms of cancer seen in transplant patients include cancer of the lymph nodes (lymphoma), uterine cervix, cancer of the large bowel, cancer of the native kidneys and urinary tract and prostate cancer.
The table below, on page 4 of this leaflet, lists early signs and symptoms of these cancers
- Female kidney transplant patients should receive cancer screening similar to the general population. The risk of breast cancer is not increased following transplantation and national/regional guidelines apply unchanged. You may wish to discuss this with your GP. Self- examination of the breasts is

recommended. Early signs and symptoms of breast cancer are described in the table below on page 4 of this leaflet

- Screening for prostate cancer and bowel cancer is also no different from the general population. No screening is recommended for cancer of the native kidneys and urinary tract
- **Stop smoking.** Smoking increases the risk of cancer in addition to its negative effect on heart disease
- The immunosuppressive medication **must** be re-considered if cancer is detected. Your transplant team must therefore know if a diagnosis of cancer is made
- In some forms of cancer, conversion of the immunosuppressive medication is an effective cancer treatment because some immunosuppressive drugs prevent rejection **and** fight cancer
- These recommendations are based on the publication

Skin cancer	Persistent bump on the skin, resembling a wart or a pimple that never heals completely and bleeds; moles that change in size or shape or colour or bleed or become itchy
Cancer of the lymphatic system (lymphoma)	Lumps in the armpit, in the neck or in the groin; fever and night sweats, unexplained weight loss
Cancer of the uterine cervix	Bleeding between monthly periods, unusual discharge, painful or heavy periods
Cancer of the large bowel	Blood in stool (motions), changes in bowel habits (diarrhoea and constipation), unexplained weight loss
Cancer of the native kidneys and urinary tract	Blood in urine, persistent loin pain, unexplained weight loss, fever
Prostate cancer	Weak and interrupted flow of urine, continuous deep pain in pelvis and lower back
Breast cancer	Lump, swelling under the arm, peculiar skin changes

Table 1: Signs and symptoms of common forms of cancer

Disclaimer: This leaflet was compiled on the basis of personal and institutional experience. Other recommendations may apply to individual patients. The contents of this leaflet do **not** replace a consultation with the transplant team/nephrologists.

Sources of further information

Contact us:

If you have any further questions please contact our pre-dialysis team 01772-522902 (answer phone)

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.kidney.org.uk

Reference

Baker R, et al.

Post-Operative Care in the Kidney Transplant Recipient UK Renal Association 6th Edition Final Version 2017

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Gujarati:

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણામાં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

Romanian:

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

Polish:

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Urdu:

دو سر ی زبانوں او ر بڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو یی چھپا یں ییہ ابی دست بو یسکت ہے برا ے مہر یان پو ے یچھہی۔ معلومات

Arabic:

مطبوعه بأ حروف كبير ة و بلغات إذا كنت تر يد مسا عدة في فهم هذه لمعلومات يُر جى أن تطلب أخرى يمكن تو فسير هذه المعلوما ت

Department: Medicine

Division: Renal

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