

# Information for patients and carers

## Advice for Patients after a Kidney Transplant



This leaflet provides advice and guidance for patients who have had a successful kidney transplant and for their carers and loved ones.

The following statements are based on personal and institutional experience.

## Having a kidney transplant

- A transplant is a life-changing experience. Whether you have received a kidney transplant from a deceased donor or as a living donor transplant: Try to regard it as a unique gift and treat it with respect. There is a shortage of transplants and patients have to wait so do not waste your transplant
- If you have received a kidney from a deceased donor you may wish to consider writing a letter to the donor's family. The team at NHS Blood and Transplant will facilitate this, the letter must not reveal any of your personal details. A letter is not expected, but it is often very much appreciated by donor families and can be written at any time after transplant. Please speak to a member of the team if you are interested in writing a letter to the donor's family
- You will experience greater personal freedom than on dialysis and a return to a more normal lifestyle. Also, you will enjoy more freedom in terms of nutrition and travel
- You may have many questions after transplantation. Furthermore, you may feel overwhelmed by information, advice and appointments with different doctors. Please do not hesitate to ask for advice (our telephone number is under contact details on this leaflet). You may find the experience of transplantation difficult or overwhelming; let us know if you want to speak to a psychologist

## Getting organised and looking after yourself

- Enjoy your new freedom. Speak to the transplant team if you consider going on holiday. You may wish to discuss appropriate precautions with a member of the transplant team, depending on your destination and your medical situation at the time of travel
- Keep a folder with copies of all letters sent by the transplant team, your GP and your nephrologists and other doctors as well as copies of laboratory values. This will help you keep track of things. It will also help us if things get complicated
- It is important that you do not miss appointments as your transplant function should be checked on a regular basis. Appointments are face to face when patients are not well, via video (for routine appointments) or via telephone (for example to discuss a particular issue or laboratory result or to ensure we are making progress on a medical problem)
- Even if you feel well, it is important to attend clinic because it is very rare that you would get any symptoms with transplant rejection. Please telephone the departmental secretaries on the number provided on the letterhead of our clinic letters to let us know if you cannot attend so that we can use the time to see somebody else who may need help. Similarly, it is just as important to attend clinic if you are unwell. Please telephone the transplant nursing team if you are unsure whether to attend or not
- Your immune system is impaired by the anti-rejection medication. Do not ignore signs of infection. A fever, cough, urinary symptoms or abdominal pain will need urgent attention. You should seek help from your GP or present to A&E if you are unwell. Please contact our transplant nursing team if you cannot find help

- If you feel unwell or think something is seriously wrong, seek advice early and contact the transplant team. It is advisable to let your GP surgery know that you have had a transplant to alert them to the fact that you are now more vulnerable to infection
- Look after yourself in between clinic appointments. Eat a healthy diet, do not smoke and consider exercise
- We can provide online access to results of blood tests via a secure website and mobile telephone app, this will help you keep track of the transplant function
- A large variety of patient information leaflets for transplant patients are available. They cover many topics and they are all in the public domain on the trust website. If you cannot find the answer to a particular question, please ask a member of the team

## Medication after a kidney transplant

- Your medication is extremely important after a kidney transplant, in particular your anti-rejection drugs. Take your medication regularly for as long as the transplant lasts. This is essential. Failure to take the tablets may result in rejection and irreversible loss of the kidney
- Your anti-rejection medication is prescribed by the transplant team and dispensed by our team of transplant pharmacists. Please ensure you do not run out of stock for your anti-rejection medication. Please let the transplant pharmacists know when you approach the need to re-stock i.e., when you have three weeks of supply left
- Please let the transplant team know if you struggle with remembering your medication

- There are several options to help you remember, from a dosette box to use of the TransplantHero app for the smartphone to help you remember (<http://www.transplanthero.com/>)
- Have a list of your medication (tablets) ready and up to date when you see the transplant team. Your GP surgery can print out your repeat prescription for you. We would recommend you keep a copy of your prescription on you either in your wallet or on your phone in case of emergencies
- When you have blood tests to check the levels of the immunosuppressive drugs, please make sure that bloods are taken before the morning dose of immunosuppressive drugs
- If you forget a dose of your immunosuppressive medication, seek advice. Do not stop your medication
- All immunosuppressive medication has side effects. Please speak to a member of the team if you have concerns in this regard, do not stop or alter your immunosuppressive medication yourself
- Do not take any other medication (this includes over-the-counter drugs such as anti-inflammatory medication or herbal medication) unless a member of the transplant team has checked that it is safe to take in your particular case

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact: The Kidney Transplant Team on telephone: **01772 523475** (answer machine) or email: [renalpost-transplantteam@lthtr.nhs.uk](mailto:renalpost-transplantteam@lthtr.nhs.uk)

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware)

<https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>

[www.kidney.org.uk](http://www.kidney.org.uk)

About writing a letter to a donor's family

<https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/organ-transplantation/resources/writing-to-a-donor-family-or-recipient/>

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

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**.

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.**  
**This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

[patientexperienceandinvolem@LTHTR.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceandinvolem@LTHTR.nhs.uk)

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