



Information for patients

## 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 of page 3 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 on page 3 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.kidney.org.uk

## Reference:

Baker R, et al.

Post-Operative Care in the Kidney Transplant Recipient

UK Renal Association 6th Edition Final Version 2017

### Cantonese:

如果你希望以另外一種格式接收該資訊，請和我們聯絡，不必猶豫。

### Gujarati:

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી રચના કે ફોર્મેટમાં મેળવવાની ઈચ્છા હોય, તો કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરતા અચકાશો નહિ.

### Hungarian:

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, ha más formában kéri ezt az információt.

### Polish:

Jeżeli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt.

### Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਝਿਜਕੋ।

### Urdu:

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو کسی اور صورت میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کرنے میں ہچکچاہٹ محسوس نہ کریں۔

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

**Department: Renal**

**Division: Medicine**

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