

# Fact Sheet on Kidney Transplantation

A kidney transplant is when you put a healthy human kidney into the body of a person with kidney failure.

A kidney transplant is one of the most common transplant operations in the United States.

Most people believe a kidney transplant is the best way to deal with kidney failure because it lets you be more like the way you were before you got sick.

## Advantages of a transplant can include:

- Feel healthier
- More energy
- Live almost normal life
- No dialysis
- Able to work full time
- Medicare pays for your surgery and pays when a person gives you a kidney

## Disadvantages of a transplant can include :

- Required to take costly drugs daily
- Limit on what Medicare pays for drugs
- Possible side effects of drugs
- Possible weight gain
- New kidney may stop working
- Not all people are eligible for a transplant
- Long waiting list if you do not have a live donor

## The donated kidney may be from:

- Living relative, such as a parent, brother, sister or child or unrelated person, such as a wife, husband, or friend
- Deceased donor—a person who has recently died

Your doctor will need to send you to a transplant center. You will be checked out by a transplant team. The transplant team will make sure that you are a good candidate for a kidney transplant. A kidney transplant is NOT recommended if you have:

- Certain infections such as TB or bone infection
- Trouble taking drugs several times a day for the rest of your life
- Heart, lung, or liver disease
- Other life-threatening diseases
- History of cancer
- Infections such as hepatitis that are active
- Smoking, alcohol or drug abuse, or other risky habits

You may also want to think about visiting more than one transplant center to see which is best for you. Ask about success rates and about travel and housing to stay in right after the surgery.

You can be on more than one waiting list if you have the ability to travel.

If you get a transplant, you must plan to see your doctor on a regular basis. You will need to take kidney drugs for the rest of your life. That is why they say a kidney transplant is not a total cure for kidney failure, but a treatment just like dialysis.

