

Staying healthy while waiting for a kidney transplant

St. Michael's
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Information for patients and families

It is important for you to stay healthy before and after your kidney transplant. This brochure has some tips on how you can stay healthy.

- 1. Stay positive.** Keep yourself busy with things that make you happy. Learn a new hobby or pick up an old one. Depression is common while waiting for a transplant. You may want to join a support group. Talk to your social worker for ideas.
- 2. Be active every day.** People on dialysis often feel tired and weak. Exercise is a good way to build your strength and your endurance. Regular exercise can also help to lower stress, depression and tiredness. It is important that you are as fit and healthy as you can be when a kidney becomes available. This will help you recover from the transplant surgery. Speak to your team about physical activity for you.
- 3. Eat healthy.** Dialysis removes healthy proteins from your blood and sticking to a kidney diet can be very difficult. A registered dietitian that specializes in kidney nutrition can help to make sure you get enough protein. The dietitian can also help you reach an appropriate body weight. If you are overweight or obese, losing weight will help to lower your chances of having problems with the surgery and recovery.

The dietitian can help you to:

- Eat the right amount of protein
- Keep your blood sugar in target
- Keep your cholesterol levels in target
- Keep the right amount of potassium, sodium and phosphorus in your diet

4. **Quit smoking.** This will help your body to heal and recover properly after surgery. Ask your healthcare team for help.
5. **Say yes to help.** Learn that it is okay to ask people for help. Let them help you when they offer. Involving your family and friends to help care for you can make this journey easier. Small errands can add up and a break can make a big difference.
6. **Take your medicines.** If you have any problems with your medicines, talk to your healthcare team.
7. **Get your regular vaccinations.** You should get a flu shot every fall.
8. **See your dentist.** It is important for you to have good oral health. After your transplant, you have a higher chance of getting a mouth infection.
9. **Take charge of your health.** Some tests have to be repeated while you are on the wait list for a kidney. Keep all of your appointments. Speak with your dialysis healthcare team if you have any issues or concerns.

Please feel free to ask us any questions at any point in the process. This can help you to make decisions that are right for you. We are here to support you. Contact us at 416-867-7460 extension 8436.

St. Michael's cares about your health. For reliable health information, visit our Patient and Family Learning Centre, room 6-004, 6th floor, Cardinal Carter Wing, or find us online at www.stmichaelshospital.com/learn

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Ask your healthcare provider about this information if you have questions.