

## CARING FOR YOUR NEW ORGAN: REJECTION

### Rejection

Many transplant recipients may experience a [rejection](#) episode at some point. A rejection episode can be scary, but it usually does not mean that the organ has stopped, or will stop working. Rejection occurs when your [immune system](#) attacks your new organ, which is a natural response. Your immune system is "programmed" to fight foreign invaders in your body such as [viruses](#), [bacteria](#), and, unfortunately, your new organ. *Today's [anti-rejection medications](#) are stronger and better able to prevent rejection episodes than ever before.* Most rejection episodes can be successfully treated.

### Preventing Organ Rejection

The best way to prevent rejection is to take all medicines in the way your doctor prescribed them - the right amount, at the right times. Don't miss a single dose. Your nurse or one of your doctors can help you with tips to help you remember your medicines. If you have problems getting your medications or if you miss more than one dose, call your Transplant Coordinator, one of the nurses on the Transplant Unit, or other members of your transplant team right away.

### What to Do if Rejection Occurs

Rejection can usually be treated if it is recognized and treated early. Many patients do not have any symptoms of rejection; this makes it important to keep your clinic and blood test appointments. Some patients feel ill with aches or fevers or other symptoms. The table below lists some of the warning signs of rejection. A piece of tissue ("biopsy") may be obtained to determine if a rejection episode has occurred. This is done by examining the biopsy tissue under a microscope (**pathology**). Based on how the tissue looks, your transplant team can determine if something is wrong and how to treat it.

Organ Transplanted	Some Warning Signs of Rejection
<b>Kidney</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain over the graft site</li> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Flu-like illness such as chills, nausea, aches and pains, vomiting, tiredness</li> <li>• Little or decreased urine output</li> <li>• Weight gain or swelling of ankles or legs or feet</li> <li>• NOTE: Most kidney transplant patients with rejection will not experience these symptoms. Most rejection is detected based on blood test results. Symptoms above would indicate severe rejection.</li> </ul>
<b>Heart</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Flu-like illness such as chills, nausea, aches and pains, vomiting, tiredness</li> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> <li>• Difficulty sleeping on your back</li> <li>• Irregular or abnormal heartbeat</li> <li>• Weight gain or swelling of body or legs</li> <li>• Fall in blood pressure</li> </ul>
<b>Liver</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Flu-like illness such as chills, nausea, aches and pains, vomiting, tiredness</li> <li>• Itching</li> <li>• Yellowing of eyes or skin</li> <li>• Light-colored stools or darker colored urine (tea-colored)</li> <li>• Weight gain or swelling</li> </ul>
<b>Lung</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortness of breath (dyspnea)</li> <li>• Chest pain</li> <li>• Dry cough</li> <li>• Decreased movement of air during breathing</li> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Flu-like illness such as chills, nausea, aches and pains, vomiting, tiredness</li> </ul>
<b>Pancreas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abdominal pain or at surgical site</li> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Increased blood or urine glucose (diabetes)</li> <li>• Swelling of the belly</li> <li>• Increased urination</li> </ul>