



Are You Ready? Preparing for Kidney Transplantation

Prepare yourself for kidney transplantation by keeping up to date on the items below:

Item:	Description:	Next Steps:
Communication with the Mass General Transplant Center	Please inform the Transplant Center if you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move or change your phone number or health insurance • Start dialysis for the first time, or change dialysis unit, nephrologist or primary care physician. • Are hospitalized or develop cancer, heart disease, a serious infection or any significant medical condition, or if you have any abnormal testing such as abnormal cardiac stress test. 	For address, telephone, or insurance changes, call the MGH Registration Center at 866-211-6588. For other issues, call your transplant coordinator at Mass General Transplant Center (617) 726-6631.
Good general health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See your primary care physician regularly • If you are on dialysis, follow the dialysis prescription, take recommended medications, and follow the diet and advice of your care team. • Blood and platelet transfusions can be life saving, but can cause problems for transplantation. <i>Should a transfusion be recommended to you, be sure to inform the doctor that you are on the list for kidney transplantation.</i> 	Follow the advice of your primary care physician, primary nephrologist, other physicians and dialysis care team (<i>if you are on dialysis</i>).
Good mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidney failure can be stressful and can worsen anxiety, depression and other similar conditions. Your mental health may need as much attention as your physical health. • If you require mental health treatment, you must receive the recommended care to remain eligible for kidney transplant. 	Notify a social worker or physician about serious symptoms such as hopelessness, worry, depression, or thoughts of self-harm. Follow up with recommended treatments.
Healthy Habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoking, drug use and excessive alcohol use can increase risks of transplant complications. • If you require relapse prevention treatment for a history of drug or alcohol abuse, you must receive the recommended care to remain eligible. 	Notify a social worker or primary care physician if you are having issues with drugs or alcohol.
Healthy weight	Patients with excessively high and low body weight experience an increased risk of complications after kidney transplant. <i>At Mass General, body mass index or BMI must be < 38-40 for patients to receive a kidney transplant.</i>	Eat a healthy diet and consult your physician or dietician about what your goal weight.

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Routine cancer screenings	You must stay current with age and gender appropriate cancer screening as recommended by the American Cancer Society, such as colonoscopy, mammograms, PSA testing, among others.	Arrange necessary cancer screenings with your primary physician and fax results to Mass General.
Health Insurance	Maintain adequate health insurance coverage for transplantation and its associated treatments and medications	Call the Financial Coordinator at 617-643-0767 with questions.
Vaccinations	You should receive the vaccines below if your primary physician believes you are eligible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flu vaccine (<i>annually</i>) • Pneumonia vaccines: pneumovax and prevnar • TDaP • Hepatitis B (<i>40 mcg dose recommended for patients with reduced kidney function</i>) • Shingles • <i>We will notify you if Varicella or Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccines are required.</i> 	Arrange necessary vaccines with your primary physician or nephrologist and <i>mail or fax testing results to your transplant coordinator at 617-643-4261</i>
Support from friends or family	Transplant patients need help from friends or family with meals, medication management and pick up, rides to and from doctor and blood check appointments, care for pets, among other things.	Keep your family and friends up-to-date so they are ready to help. Call the Social Worker for help.
Additional testing as requested by the Transplant Center	Being listed for kidney transplant does not mean that you are ready to actually receive a transplant. Before transplantation, patients on the waiting list must undergo additional evaluation to establish that the procedure and anti-rejection medications will be safe.	Undergo testing and additional evaluation visits as requested by Mass General Transplant Center and others MD's.
Blood tests for tissue typing	When you are getting closer to the top of the kidney transplant list, you will be required to submit monthly blood samples to Mass General Tissue Typing Lab. If you are on dialysis, the blood test kits will be mailed to your dialysis unit. If you are not on dialysis, they will be mailed to you home. You will not be offered a transplant if these blood tests aren't up-to-date.	Obtain required blood tests if the kits are mailed to you. If you are on dialysis, confirm with your unit that the kits are being submitted monthly.
Living kidney donation	If you can identify a living kidney donor, you may be able to receive a transplant without waiting longer on the list. It's never too late for a live donor kidney transplant!	Interested donors should call (617) 643-7193 or visit the MGH transplant website.
Transplant Knowledge	The more knowledgeable you are about kidney transplant, the greater the chance of success. Mass General offers "Information Sessions for Kidney Transplant Candidates" that cover a variety of important topics.	Attend an info session: call social workers Eileen Keegan or Emily Menart at 617-726-6631 for dates and times.