

Your Guide to Kidney Transplantation Options

South West Transplant Centre

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About this booklet

The aim of this booklet is to provide you with some more information about kidney transplantation options. This booklet is designed for patients who have Chronic Kidney Disease stage 4 or 5 or are undergoing a form of dialysis.

It will provide you with information about different types of kidney transplant, the benefits and risks of transplantation and investigations you may require to see if you are suitable.

There are also some useful contacts at the end if you would like to discuss anything in more detail.

What is a kidney transplant?

A kidney transplant is where a healthy kidney is surgically removed from one person and then surgically inserted into another person whose kidneys aren't working effectively.

Why do I need a kidney transplant?

Your kidneys have several functions in order to maintain your bodily functions. When your kidneys fail they can no longer filter excess water and waste products in your blood effectively. You may also become anaemic. This may result in symptoms of fatigue, shortness of breath and ankle swelling.

There are several treatments available to you when your kidneys fail including a kidney transplant, peritoneal dialysis or haemodialysis.

The preferred treatment for many patients with end stage kidney disease is a kidney transplant as this can often result in better health and quality of life in comparison to dialysis.

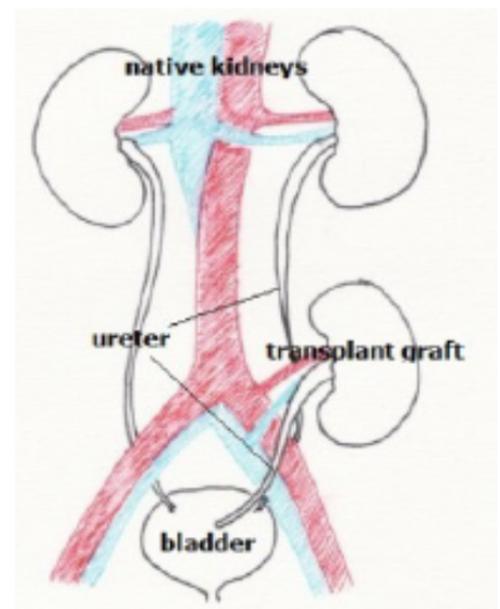
However, a kidney transplant may not be a suitable option for everyone. Some people choose not to undergo a kidney transplant and would prefer to remain on dialysis and others may have significant medical conditions which put them at higher risk to undergo the procedure.

What types of kidney transplant are there?

Kidneys can be transplanted from living or deceased donors. A living donor transplant is the preferred option.

Living Donation

Living donors are often family or close friends but can also be a person who is unknown to you.

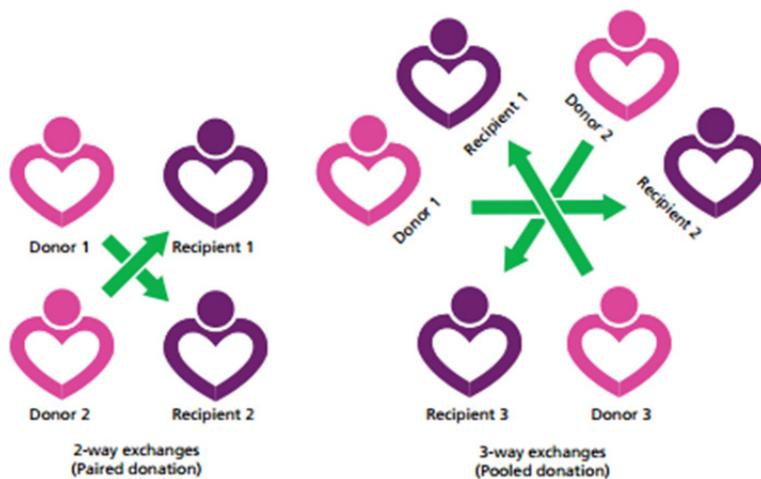


If you have someone who would like to be considered as a potential living donor then please contact the living donor coordinator for more information. The first step would be to check your compatibility. Here we would look at both yours and your donors blood groups and individual tissue types which make up your DNA. From this we can tell whether you are compatible with each other.

If you are compatible then your donor can potentially donate directly to you.

If you are not compatible with your potential donor then there are still ways that they can donate to you through the kidney sharing scheme. This is where you may be matched with other people who also aren't compatible so that you still benefit from having a live kidney transplant.

Your donor will require careful work up and investigations to determine their suitability whether they



donate to you directly or through the kidney sharing scheme. They will then be offered lifelong follow up with the renal team.

Who can donate a kidney?

Anyone who is fit, well and competent to make the choice to be considered as a living donor can come forward as a donor. All living donation in the UK is regulated by the Human Tissue Authority and Human Tissue Act (HTA) 2005. This is required by law to ensure there is no coercion or financial incentive tied to the donation. Both you and your donor will need to meet with an independent assessor to prove your relationship in order to gain legal approval for the transplant.

How long does it take from start of work up to a live donation?

The average time from investigations to live donation is about 18 weeks. The transplant surgeon and the renal consultant have the right to halt the investigation process at any time if there are any changes in your medical condition. Both you and your donor have the right to change your minds at any time.

Deceased Donation

Organs can also come from people who have signed up to the national organ donor register or whose family have given consent for their organs to be donated. These are people who have had a medical event which has resulted in them being in an intensive care unit or emergency department. There are two types of deceased donors.

Brain Stem Death

This is where a person no longer has activity in their brain stem due to a severe brain injury. They have permanently lost the potential for consciousness and the capacity to breathe. This may happen even when a ventilator is keeping the person's heart beating and oxygen is circulated through their blood.

Circulatory Death

This is the irreversible loss of function in the heart and lungs after a cardiac arrest from which the patient cannot or should not be resuscitated. It can also be the planned withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment from a patient within the Intensive Care Unit.

What does having a kidney transplant offer me?

- Better long term health compared to dialysis
- Freedom from dialysis
- Freedom from fluid and some dietary restrictions
- Improved energy levels
- Improved fertility
- Ability to work and travel more freely
- Improved quality of life.

Are there any disadvantages to having a kidney transplant?

- Risk of failure
- Risk of infection
- Risk of bleeding
- Risk of recurrence of original kidney disease
- Side effects of immunosuppressant (anti- rejection medication)

How do I get on the waiting list?

You will be seen by your renal consultant to assess your medical suitability for transplantation. You will undergo a variety of tests, which could include:

- ECG- records the rhythm and electrical activity of your heart.
- Chest X-ray
- Echocardiogram- a scan that creates images of your heart.
- Myocardial perfusion scan (MIBI or MPS) - a scan that is used to assess the blood flow to your heart muscle when it is stressed by exercise or medication.

- Doppler ultrasound (Ultrasound test) - a test to see how blood flows through a blood vessel. It helps the doctors evaluate blood flow through major arteries and veins.
- Coronary angiogram- a procedure that uses X-ray imaging to review your hearts blood vessels.
- Cardiopulmonary Exercise Test (CPET) - a test to look at your fitness where you have to perform on an exercise bicycle with an anaesthetist.

Once your investigations have been completed your case will be discussed at a meeting with our renal consultants and surgeons. If your investigations are all satisfactory then you will be invited to attend a transplant assessment clinic. At this clinic you will have further bloods taken to check your blood group and tissue type for matching purposes. You may have already had this taken prior to this appointment however we do need these blood tests twice for confirmation.

They will also take further blood from you to help reduce the risk of potential post-transplant illness, and obtain your consent to test for the following:

- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- Hepatitis C
- Hepatitis B
- Syphilis
- Epstein Barr Virus (EBV) (glandular fever)
- Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
- Chickenpox

At this appointment, you will be seen by a renal consultant and/or surgeon and a transplant nurse practitioner you will also attend a patient education seminar on kidney transplantation, where you will be able to ask questions and find out more about the whole procedure.

The Waiting List

Once you have been to transplant assessment clinic and have been deemed suitable for a kidney transplant the waiting list nurse will contact you to 'activate' you on the waiting list. The list is centrally coordinated by NHS Blood and Transplant. The list is not a list as such as it does not work on a first come first served basis but kidneys are allocated based on the best match for that person's tissue type and blood group.

It is impossible to predict how soon a kidney will become available. It may take days or weeks, but is more likely to take months or years. The average waiting time is around 12-18months.

Where will the transplant be carried out?

Both the investigations and operation will take place at Derriford Hospital. However if you require a simultaneous pancreas and kidney transplant, this will be undertaken at Oxford.

You will be expected to attend clinic appointments both pre-transplant and post-transplant. After your transplant this will be twice a week for the first 6-8 weeks at Derriford hospital (or Oxford if you have a simultaneous pancreas and kidney transplant). The frequency of these

appointments will decrease as you recover and your blood results become more stable.

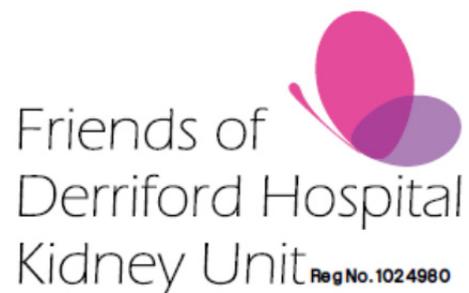
What can I do whilst I am waiting for a kidney transplant?

It is very important that you try to keep yourself as healthy as possible. This may increase your chances of success and recovery.

- Eat a healthy well balanced diet
- Stop smoking
- Exercise-within your limits if you are able

Peer Support

We understand that undergoing renal replacement therapy can be very stressful and sometimes a lonely experience. We have a patient group called The Friends of Derriford Kidney and Pancreas Unit which is a charity run by a group of patients who have been through some of the situations that you may be experiencing. If you wanted to talk to somebody who has already been through this to ask questions then please contact Linda Boorer or one of the transplant secretaries who are listed on the useful contacts page.



Contact us

Transplant Nurse Consultant
01752 437145

Living Donor Co-ordinator
01752 439955

Transplant Nurse Practitioner/ Waiting List Nurse
01752 437146

Healthcare Assistant
01752 437145

Transplant Secretary
01752 439957

Useful Links

NHS Blood and
Transplant

Organ Donor and
Transplantation

Directorate

Fox Den Road

Bristol BS34 8RR

01179757575

<http://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/>

National Kidney
Federation

The Point,

Coach road,

Shireoaks

Worksop S81 8BW

<https://kidney.org.uk/>

Human Tissue Authority

Finlaison House,

15-17 Furnival Street

London EC 4A 1AB

02072113400

www.hta.gov.uk

Space for new SWTC
website

The British Transplant
Society

Association House,

South Park Road

Macclesfield

Cheshire SK11 6SH

01625504060

www.bts.org.uk



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**This leaflet is available in
large print
and other formats
and languages:
Contact: Administrator
Tel: 01752 439957**

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