

**"Anyone can give up; it is the easiest thing in the world to do.  
But to hold it together when everyone else would  
understand if you fell apart, that is true strength"**



**TRIOMPH**

A Patient Support Group

Transplant Recipients of India and Organ failure patients – a Movement to Provide Hope.

Powered by MOHAN Foundation



TRIOMPH is committed to improving the quality of life of organ failure patients, transplant recipients and their families, through patient empowerment, awareness, education, support and advocacy.

TRIOMPH strives to be widely recognized and respected as the voice of organ failure patients awaiting a transplant, as well as transplant survivors, including their families and caregivers.

[trionph.org.in](http://trionph.org.in)

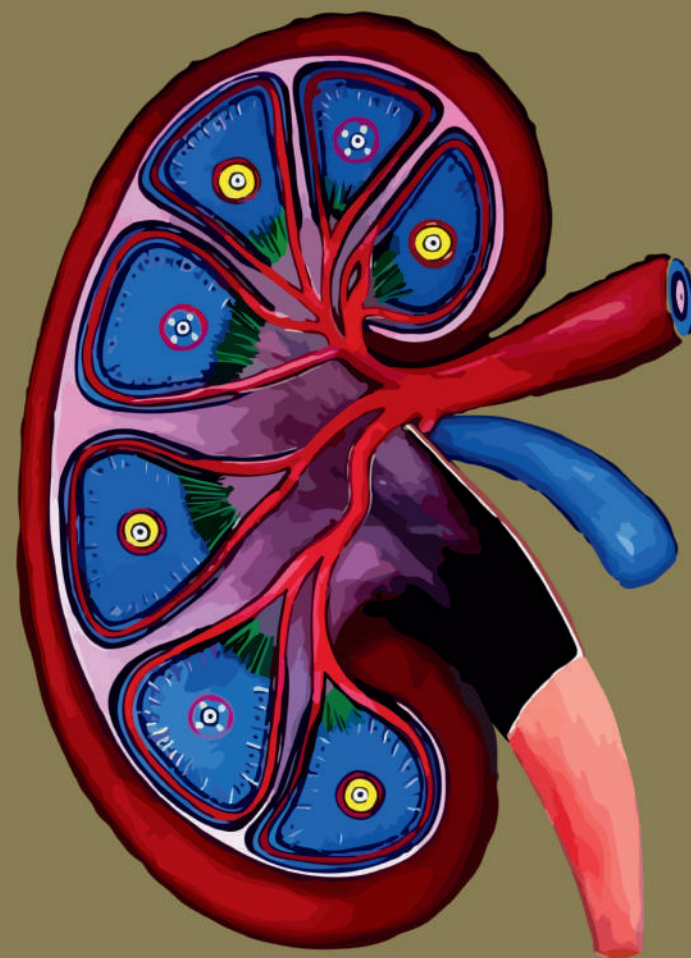
For more information,  **1800 103 7100**

**SUPPORTED BY**



# FAQS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## KIDNEY TRANSPLANTATION

Compiled by TRIOMPH - A Patient Support Group





# INTRODUCTION

When you or someone you care for has been diagnosed with kidney disease, it can be shocking and overwhelming. But the best way to deal with it is to reach out for help. One way is to learn more about options available.

Talk to your healthcare providers to learn if they recommend that the patient remain on dialysis or get a transplant.

Read all you can. The more you know, the better prepared you can be to face the challenges and the road ahead. You will be better equipped to discuss and appreciate different options with your healthcare provider.

Talk to other kidney recipients about their transplant experiences. Such discussions can be quite encouraging and positive, and they tend to provide better clarity to the foggy thoughts in the mind about life after transplant. You can reach out to support groups that enable such interactions.

The following booklet aims at giving you detailed information on kidney transplant – before and after. This booklet is meant for persons suffering from kidney disease, persons on dialysis and families and friends of such persons.





# SECTION 1:

## KIDNEY TRANSPLANTATION

### WHAT IS KIDNEY TRANSPLANTATION?

It is a medical procedure by which healthy kidneys donated by living or deceased (brain dead) donors, is transplanted into end stage kidney failure patients (recipients), thereby giving them a second chance at leading normal lives.

### WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER A KIDNEY TRANSPLANT? CAN'T I REMAIN ON DIALYSIS INSTEAD?

- Dialysis poses many challenges to the individuals, such as –
  - o Food and fluid restrictions
  - o Financial drain
  - o Affects your relationships
  - o Missing out on leisurely activities
  - o Frequent hospitalizations
  - o Dependency on other people

Kidney transplant is the only option which enables kidney failure to be treated and gives the patient another opportunity to lead normal life. Kidney transplant recipients live longer and have a better quality of life than those who stay on dialysis.

- In dialysis, an external machine does the job of filtering and purifying the blood, thereby replacing the job done by the kidney.

However, our kidneys perform many other functions like producing hormones to regulate blood pressure and maintain electrolyte balance, which a dialysis machine cannot do.

Dialysis is estimated to be far costlier than kidney transplant. Over a lifespan of 30 years, cost of hemodialysis is estimated to be around INR 1.2 crores.

(Assuming monthly cost of INR 16,000/- which includes dialysis cost, dialyzers, cost of medicines, tests, consultations, travel to and from dialysis centre).

In comparison, the cost of kidney transplant is estimated to be INR 35 lakhs over a lifespan of 30 years. (Including pre transplant tests, transplant surgery and post-transplant medicine costs, tests and checkups)



## WHO CAN GET A KIDNEY TRANSPLANT?

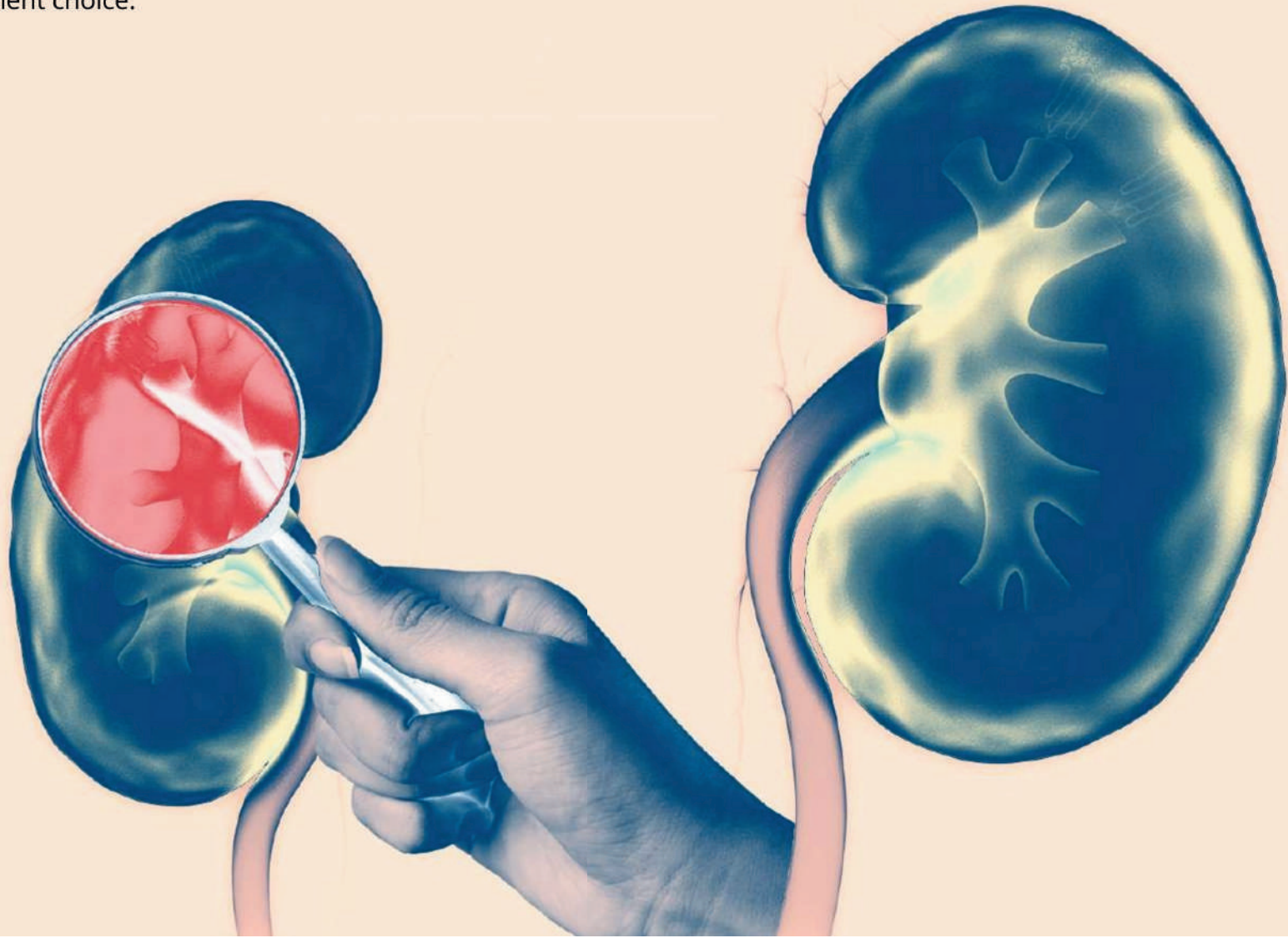
Kidney patients of all ages—from children to seniors—can get a transplant.

It is important that you must be healthy enough to have the operation. You must also be free from cancer, COVID-19 and other infections. When you are being considered for transplant, you will first have a full medical and psychosocial evaluation to make sure that you are physically and mentally fit to undergo a transplant. The evaluation helps find any problems, so that they can be corrected before transplant. For most people, getting a transplant can be a good treatment choice.

## WHAT IS PRE-EMPTIVE KIDNEY TRANSPLANT?

Getting a transplant before you need to start dialysis is called a pre-emptive transplant. Thus, dialysis can be avoided altogether.

Existing research suggests that less time spent on dialysis before transplant can improve the outcome after a transplant.







## WHAT TYPES OF TRANSPLANT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE?

### a. Living donor transplantation

A living donor is one who is willing to donate one of their kidneys to the person who is in need. Such a donor must be above 18 years to donate.

### b. Deceased donor transplantation

Organs such as heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas and small intestines can be obtained from a person who is medically declared to be brain-dead. This is called deceased organ donation. Brain death mostly happens due to injury to the brain caused by accident or due to intracerebral bleed.

The kidneys of such a brain-dead person are allocated to two patients registered on the state's waiting list, by a nodal agency appointed by the state.

## WHO CAN BE A LIVING DONOR?

### A. Your near-relatives

Includes spouse, parents, children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren.

### B. Other than near-relatives

Other than near-relatives includes all donors except those defined under near-related donors (uncle/ aunt / cousins / friend / neighbour, etc.)



## WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR A LIVING DONOR?

The living donor must be –

- Healthy, of a sound mind and declared fit for donating the kidney, by the doctors
- 18+ years of age (up to 65 years generally)
- Willing to donate out of affection / attachment to the recipient
- Willing to donate without any coercion
- Willing to donate without any expectation of money or in kind

## HOW ARE LIVING DONOR AND RECIPIENT MATCHED?

Donor matching is a very important step, and the blood type and tissue type matching is done.

Recipient	Blood donor			
	O	A	B	AB
O	✓	✗	✗	✗
A	✓	✓	✗	✗
B	✓	✗	✓	✗
AB	✓	✓	✓	✓

Multiple tests (like HLA crossmatching) are done. If they match, they are allowed to proceed with the legal formalities.





## **WHAT APPROVALS ARE REQUIRED TO GO AHEAD WITH THE LIVING KIDNEY DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION?**

If the donor is near relative, the hospital's own Authorisation Committee can grant approval

In case of other than near-relatives, the case may be considered by the State Authorisation Committee.

The Transplant Coordinator in your hospital will help you with all the documentation.

The donor, recipient, and their families are interviewed, the proceedings are video recorded to verify that the donor is donating out of his/her free will, out of attachment / affection and that there is no illegal exchange of cash or anything in kind.

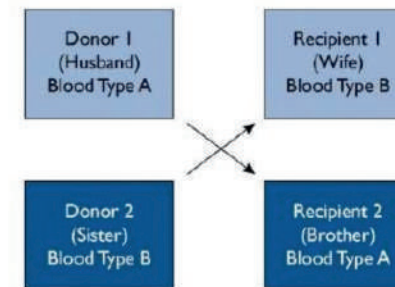




## WHAT IF I HAVE A WILLING FAMILY MEMBER AND IT IS NOT A MATCH?

As long as you have a family member who is willing to donate and he/she is fit enough, but not compatible with your blood type, there are few other options–

### a. Swap Transplants



You can receive a kidney from an unrelated person through a Paired donation (or Swap transplant). Your family member may give his/her kidney to someone else who is a better match, and you will receive a compatible kidney from that recipient's relative.

### b. ABO Incompatible transplants

This is the newest advancement, whereby a non-compatible family member who wishes to donate to you, can still do so, after you are made to undergo a process called plasmapheresis.

## ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO THE LIVING DONOR?

No donation is risk-free - the operation itself and subsequent living with one kidney. However, the risks are minimized by thorough prior investigations to assess donor health.

While considering whether your family member is fit to donate, he/she is made to undergo a battery of tests, to ensure that the donor is healthy and fit enough to donate. Donor safety is given highest priority and kidney donation is not proceeded by the transplant doctor if any risk to donor health is perceived.





## **WHAT IF NO ONE IN MY FAMILY IS FIT ENOUGH OR WILLING TO DONATE? IS THERE ANOTHER OPTION TO LIVING KIDNEY DONATION?**

Yes, you have the option of registering for getting a kidney from a deceased (brain-dead) donor.

## **HOW DOES DECEASED ORGAN DONATION WORK?**

If the relatives of the brain-dead donor are willing to donate his/her organs, the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas and small intestines are donated to those who have registered themselves on the waiting list, to receive the life-saving organ.

## **WHAT IS THE DECEASED ORGAN DONATION SCENARIO IN INDIA?**

Deceased Organ donation activity is unevenly distributed across India.

- South and West – have active deceased organ donation programme in their hospitals
- North – negligible in deceased organ donation; mostly active in living kidney donation.
- East - virtually inactive.







## WHAT IS THIS WAITING LIST?

It is a List of Patients suffering from end stage organ failure, who have registered to receive a life-saving organ from a brain-dead donor.

## HOW CAN I REGISTER ON THIS WAITING LIST?

Listed below are the steps -

1. Choose your hospital in a state that is active in deceased organ donation (remember citizens from same state will have priority)
2. Your doctor will assess your medical condition and decide if a transplant will help you
3. Your hospital will then submit your application form to the state's nodal body
4. You are registered and priority number is given based on your allocation score
5. You can know your number on the waiting list and its progress by asking your hospital's transplant coordinator

### **Note:**

- a. In most states, you can only register at a single hospital (either private or public); however, in some states like Maharashtra, you can register in one private and one public hospital. Check with your hospital's transplant coordinator about the applicable state laws.
- b. As of now, it is possible to register at multiple states; however, remember that you will receive priority in your state of residence
- c. Remember that due to acute shortage in availability of organs from deceased donors, you may have to wait for a prolonged period



## HOW ARE ORGANS ALLOCATED IN THE DECEASED ORGAN DONATION PROGRAMME?

Allocation is done –

- by the nominated nodal agency of the state
- as per Allocation law
- after evaluating the Blood Type & Tissue type match
- based on number of factors including –medical urgency & donor - recipient matching

## HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO WAIT TO GET AN ORGAN?

It depends on your waiting number in the waiting list. It could take many years as there is shortage of deceased organ donation.

Continue your dialysis and focus on maintaining good health and diet in the meanwhile. Also utilize this wait period to gather your finances in readiness for the transplant.

## HOW WILL I PAY FOR THE TRANSPLANT? / WHAT IF I AM UNABLE TO AFFORD TRANSPLANTS IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS?

Learn more about the financial side of transplantation from your transplant hospital. Evaluate your options for putting your finances together. Also ensure that you plan for post- transplant checkups and medications, as they can be a heavy drain for up to a year post- transplant.

If you have already availed of a health insurance policy prior to detection of kidney disease, then the kidney transplant surgery costs are generally covered to the extent of cover. The only condition for these policies is that the problem (renal failure or the cause for this) should not exist prior to policy start date as in that case it will fall under pre-existing disease (PED) category.





If you fall under the low-income category, find out from your transplant coordinator as to what schemes are available for you within your state. You may also apply to the Chief Minister's relief fund and Prime Minister's relief fund.

You can also raise money through Crowdfunding platforms like Milaap, Impact Guru, Ketto, etc. You may contact their campaign manager, who will set up the campaign for you, through which you may make appeals to your friends, families and acquaintances to raise funds. These platforms may charge certain fees for running your campaign.

If you fall under the low-income category, you may also apply for financial help to trusts and NGOs such as Tata Trust, MOHAN Foundation (Anudaan – Making Transplants affordable), Transplants Help the Poor Foundation, The Pravin Agarwal Foundation, and other trusts in your local regions.

### **CAN I GET A TRANSPLANT EVEN IF I HAVE OTHER HEALTH PROBLEMS?**

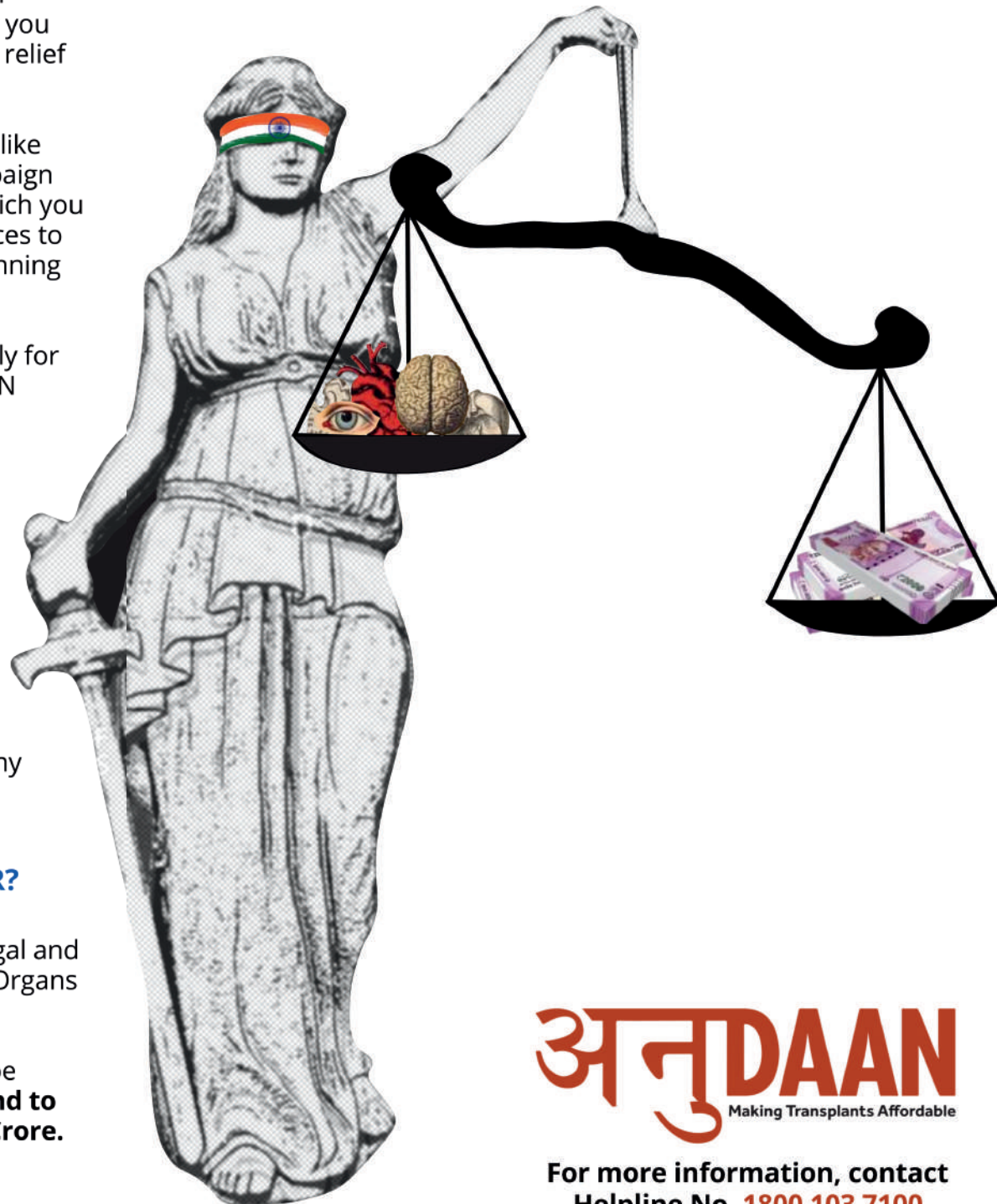
In many cases, people who are older or have other health conditions like diabetes can still have successful kidney transplants.

Careful evaluation is needed to understand and deal with any

### **CAN I BUY A KIDNEY FROM A DONOR OR A BROKER?**

**NO.** Any kind of commercial dealing in human organs is illegal and a punishable offence under the Transplantation of Human Organs Act.

The removal of any human organs without authority, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term **which may extend to 10 years and fine which may extend up to Rupees One Crore.**



**अनुDAAN**  
Making Transplants Affordable

For more information, contact  
Helpline No. **1800 103 7100**



# SECTION 2: PRE TRANSPLANT



## HOW CAN I READY MYSELF FOR THE TRANSPLANT?

### Registration-

- Register yourself on deceased organ donor waiting list
- Inform transplant coordinator about every activity and share reports in every 3 months to stay in active waiting list

### Diet and fluids-

- Majority of dialysis patients follow strict dietary and fluid restrictions.
- Over indulgence of either could make you unfit for surgery.
- For example, you may become breathless due to drinking too much fluid or your blood tests may be abnormal due to eating too much of a certain type of restricted foods.

### Medications-

- Take proper medicines as prescribed by doctors.
- Keep check on blood levels and maintain haemoglobin.
- Try not to get blood transfusion

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT WHEN I GET THE CALL SAYING THAT I HAVE BEEN ALLOTTED A KIDNEY?

- Get admitted immediately
- You will be called along with 1-2 more patients at the same time. Whosoever is the best match will be considered.
- If you are a good match, you will be readied for the surgery, else you may have to continue your wait.
- Post-surgery, you may remain in hospital for around 15-20 days.





# SECTION 3:

## LIFE AFTER TRANSPLANT

### **WILL THE TRANSPLANTED KIDNEY START WORKING IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SURGERY?**

Yes, in the majority of the living related kidney operation, the kidney will start functioning immediately after the operation.

However, in case of the kidney coming from a brain-dead donor, it may take anything from 5 days to 6 weeks to start functioning normally.

### **WHAT POST-SURGERY CARE/PRECAUTIONS ARE TO BE TAKEN?**

You need to closely monitor your kidney functions, early signs of infections or rejections and be vigilant for any other effects.

Be regular with your tests and check-ups as per the frequency prescribed to you. Set a daily alarm for your anti-rejection (immunosuppressants) medicines and make sure you do not miss or delay that. Store medicines in cool and dry place away from children and be wary of the expiry date of the drugs.

Stay in touch with the Transplant Coordinator. Meet the Dietician.

Wear a fresh face mask while visiting your hospital or before getting into any confined spaces like lifts or rooms containing outsiders.

Ensure good hygiene at home and around you. Everyone at your home will need to maintain good hygiene so as not to pass on any infections to you. If you have small children at home, ensure greater care is taken to maintain hygiene.

### **HOW OFTEN WILL I NEED TO VISIT HOSPITAL AFTER DISCHARGE?**

It is usual that in the first 4 – 8 weeks after the transplant surgery, you will be visiting the clinic about twice a week.

Once the kidney function stabilizes, clinic visits become less frequent.

At each visit, the blood, urine and blood pressure are all checked. After a year, usually, three- monthly visits are sufficient.



## WHAT ARE IMMUNOSUPPRESSANTS / ANTI-REJECTION MEDICINES?

Anti-rejection medications, also known as immunosuppressive agents, help to prevent and treat rejection. It must be taken during the "lifetime" of the transplant. If these medications are stopped, rejection may occur, and the transplanted kidney will fail.

A combination of such drugs along with supportive medication such as steroids etc., will be prescribed depending on the specific transplant needs.

- Tacrolimus
- Mycophenolate Mofetil
- Cyclosporine
- Sirolimus
- Everolimus
- Aziathropine

Most commonly prescribed combination is Tacrolimus + Mycophenolate Mofetil + Steroid.

## HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO TAKE ANTI-REJECTION MEDICINES?

FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. Taking anti-rejection tablets is extremely important for preserving functions of the transplanted kidney and for longevity. These medicines will either be started before the transplant operation or immediately afterwards.

Though it may seem to some, as if you are consuming an awful lot of medicines; however, DO NOT STOP THEM. They are your lifeline and will keep your transplanted kidney safe.

If cost of medicines is posing a problem to you, discuss this with your transplant doctor. He/she may help by changing the drugs or altering its dose appropriately.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I MISS A DOSE?

Immediately call your doctor and consult him/her. If it is time for the next dose, do not take a double dose.







### **ANY TIPS FOR USAGE OF IMMUNOSUPPRESSANTS?**

The immune suppressants may either be required to be consumed at 12-hour intervals or maybe a single dose per day, with sustained release.

Some tips:

1. Know the name of each drug you take and what it does. Once you understand that, you will be less likely to forget.
2. Use a pill box and organize your stocks so that you have at least a month's stock at any point of time
3. Set a daily alarm in your mobile phone to remind you about the timings.
4. Try and take your medicines at the same time every day.
5. If you are expected to be away from home for more than a couple of hours, ensure that you have a set of medicines in your purse / handbag.

### **WHAT CAN THE KIDNEY DONOR EXPECT AFTER DONATING A KIDNEY?**

The rate of recovery may vary greatly between individuals and the donor may ask his/her transplant doctor for an estimate for their recovery time.

After leaving the hospital, the donor will typically feel tenderness, itching and pain as the incision continues to heal. The donor should avoid lifting heavy objects or strenuous exercises for about 6 weeks following the surgery. He/she will be required to get checkups for a few months to ensure that he/she has completely healed. It is recommended that the donor should avoid contact sports like football, wrestling, boxing, etc., to avoid damage to the remaining kidney.

Other than these, the donor can quickly return to being physically fit and resume normal activities. It is advised that the donor undergoes precautionary routine annual health checkups.





You do not have to deal with these feelings alone. Getting a kidney transplant is a major life change, and it is normal to feel stressed and anxious about big life changes.

Reach out to your family and friends for support. Also, let your transplant team know about your emotional changes so they can help support you and adjust your medicines if needed. Your transplant team can also refer you to a mental health specialist.

## **I FEEL ANXIOUS ABOUT MY TRANSPLANT. WHAT DO I DO?**

Getting a transplant is usually an exciting event, but because it is also a major life change, it's normal to have all kinds of emotions afterward. If you're experiencing feelings of anxiety, depression or guilt, please know that you are not alone; many transplant patients experience these feelings at first, for many reasons.

- Mood changes may be a side effect of the immunosuppressant medicines you are taking.
- You may feel stressed or anxious about your new lifestyle.
- You may feel guilty about getting a kidney from a living or deceased donor.
- If you have been on dialysis for a long time, you may feel guilty about leaving other dialysis patients 'behind' once you get your transplant.
- Your family members may also have emotional changes as they adjust to your new lifestyle.

## **DOES THE DONOR HAVE TO LIVE WITH ANY RESTRICTIONS ON FOOD OR TRAVEL?**

No, apart from the precautions mentioned above, there are no restrictions on eating food, travelling, etc. The donor can resume work and lead a normal active life subsequently.

## **WHAT ABOUT INFECTIONS IN A KIDNEY RECIPIENT AND HOW CAN I RECOGNIZE IT?**

You should call your doctor if you have:

- A fever above 100 degrees
- Drainage from your surgical scar
- Burning sensation during urination
- More frequent urination
- cloudy urine
- A cold or a cough that won't go away cold sweats or shivering

An infection that is not treated properly can trigger off a rejection. Common sites of infection are chest, urinary tract and throat.

Women recipients are generally prone to Urinary tract infection



## HOW IS LIFE POST-TRANSPLANT?

### Routine health screenings

As mentioned earlier, to best maintain your health following a kidney transplantation, routine health check-ups are a must.

Following are the some of the standard tests that may be ordered for -

- Complete Blood Count
- Kidney Function
- Electrolytes
- Additional Blood Tests
- Tacrolimus level and Glucose level in the blood



These tests measure the amount of drugs in your blood. They need to be checked regularly to avoid levels that are too high or too low. High levels could lead to toxicity or over-immunosuppression, and low levels may lead to rejection.

- **Bone mineral density (BMD) scan (annually)**



### WHEN CAN I RETURN TO WORK?

Once your doctor clears you for work (generally a month or two after your transplant), you need to start planning on returning to normalcy, with the following precautions -

- Ensure that your work area, including the air conditioner filters have been cleaned recently. If you are travelling by your own car, get the air conditioner filters cleaned regularly.
- Avoid travelling by public modes of transport. If you are travelling by a taxi, ensure you wear your face mask and sanitize your hands regularly.
- Always carry one set of medicines in your bag/purse. In case you are held back or delayed, you are still safe.
- If someone at work is sick, keep your distance and wash your hands or keep sanitizing your hands frequently.
- Preferably, carry your own food and water to work, to ensure hygiene.
- Have your own personal cutlery and crockery at work and ensure they are cleaned well after use.
- Wear a face mask if you need to be in closed, confined spaces like lifts, small meeting rooms, etc.
- Always keep a spare face mask in your bag as a precautionary measure.



## CAN I RESUME DRIVING AFTER MY TRANSPLANT?

Most recipients can resume driving about 3-4 weeks post-transplant.

Get the car's Air conditioner filters cleaned or replaced before you start driving.

Before driving, ensure that your wound is healing well, that you are alert and not fatigued, no longer experiencing significant pain or taking medications that can cause drowsiness.

Another adult driver must accompany you on your first post-transplant drive.

## WHY IS PHYSICAL FITNESS SO IMPORTANT POST-TRANSPLANT?

Light to moderate exercises have significant health benefits for everyone but is especially more valuable for transplant patients as it will help you cope with some of the frequent side-effects of post-transplant treatment.

Your immunosuppressive therapy as well as an increase in appetite resulting from improved health post-transplantation may cause you to gain weight, develop high cholesterol, diabetes, hypertension, which may ultimately lead to heart problems and

## WHAT DO I DO TO STAY FIT?

### Exercise-

Exercise regularly to improve physical and mental health. Exercise increases strength and boost energy levels.

### Walk-

Walk at least 30 minutes every day initially and increase it to 1 hour. Moderate exercise 5 days a week is advised. You may take up walking, cycling, aerobics, dancing, Zumba or any such activities that you enjoy and help you maintain an active lifestyle.

### Regular health checkups-

Work at actively reducing your stress levels and go for regular health check-ups as prescribed to you.

They also help you stay ahead of any post-transplant complications like high cholesterol, diabetes, hypertension, obesity, etc.

### **\*Swimming in public pools is not advisable due to risk of contracting infection**

Sometime the biggest challenge is simply – how to get started. You may simply start with walking for 15-20 minutes daily, and gradually increase it to an hour. As you get more comfortable, you may add climbing stairs or jogging and such other activities. Join groups or simply have a fitness buddy for motivation.





## IS IT NECESSARY TO WATCH MY DIET AFTER TRANSPLANT?

Yes, after an organ transplant, your diet plays a very important role. You will have a better appetite after the transplant and will tend to gain unwanted weight.

- Limit high-calorie foods and other food rich in fat or sugar.
- Limit foods high in carbohydrates. When you take steroid medication, it is hard for your body to use the extra carbohydrates and this can lead to high blood sugar levels and may cause diabetes.
- Stick to low-salt diet. Transplant medicines, especially steroids may cause your body to retain fluid and higher salt in diet may result in higher blood pressure. **DO NOT CONSUME THE "LOW SALT" BRANDS THAT ARE AVAILABLE IN THE MARKET.** They are not suitable for an organ recipient as they contain potassium instead of sodium as the main ingredient.
- Initially you will need to have higher protein intake as it helps in building and repairing the muscle tissues. Later you may return to moderate protein in diet.
- As long as your transplant is working well, you should be able to consume normal amounts of potassium.
- You may need to pay close attention to levels of calcium and phosphorus in your blood. If you have been ill for a prolonged period of time, your body may lack the balance of calcium and phosphorus that are needed for healthy bones. In the months to come, your doctor will check for possible bone loss and may put you on calcium supplements.

• **Remember that you are on immune suppressant medications which make you more prone to contracting infections. Hence work at decreasing your risk of food-borne illnesses.**

- Avoid high-risk foods such as –
  - o Raw and undercooked seafood and meats
  - o Food containing raw eggs
  - o Ready-to-eat deli salads
  - o Ready-to-eat packed foods
  - o Unpasteurized eggs or dairy products and raw milk.







- Follow Food handling and storage safety such as –
  - o Wash hands well with soap and water before eating or handling foods
  - o Wash the utensils clean with hot water and soap
  - o Wash fruits and vegetables, even those with removable skin
  - o Use a thermometer to check temperature of meats. Beef and pork should be 160 degrees, turkey and chicken 180 degrees
  - o Do not eat food from damaged containers
  - o Do not share utensils or food from which others have eaten
  - o Refrigerate perishable food as soon as possible
  - o Cover all stored foods
  - o Never leave foods sit at room temperature
  - o Do not freeze uncooked foods that have already been defrosted
  - o Store eggs in refrigerator
  - o Reheat food until steaming hot throughout, when in doubt, throw it out

### CAN I EAT OUTSIDE?

Yes, you can eat outside once your kidney doctor says you can do so. Make sure that you eat only in places with good hygiene levels and take the following precautions -

- Ask for food to be freshly prepared. Request to have a special word with the chef and explain your medical condition and your needs.
- Ensure that the food item is well-cooked, so that infection-causing microorganisms such as bacteria, virus, etc., are killed during cooking.
- Preferably consume it while it is hot.
- Avoid eating raw food outside e.g., salads, as they may be carriers of microorganisms that may cause infections.
- Avoid foodstuffs and drinks that may contain large amounts of chemical additives such as preservatives, food colours etc.
- Avoid carbonated drinks.
- Do not purchase or consume food when either the food or its ingredients have been sitting for an unknown period of time. Avoid eating at buffets and roadside eateries.
- When in doubt, do not consume.





## CAN I TRAVEL AND TAKE VACATIONS?

Yes, you can begin travelling after checking with your kidney doctor. You are advised to carry a copy of your discharge summary and your latest prescription during your travels.

Avoid travelling to places that may be crowded or unhygienic. Avoid taking crowded modes of transport.

If you are planning on travelling to certain countries that require you to be vaccinated prior to travel, be sure to first check with your doctor.

## WHICH VACCINES SHOULD I AVOID AFTER TRANSPLANT?

### **Avoid Vaccinations involving “Live Vaccines”.**

You should not take vaccinations containing live virus, post-transplant, as they are linked to rejection (e.g., vaccinations for yellow fever).

Be sure to check with your transplant doctor before receiving any vaccines or boosters.

You may be advised to get Hepatitis B vaccine before transplant.

## IS COVID-19 VACCINE SAFE POST-TRANSPLANT?

Yes, the COVID-19 vaccines that do not contain live virus are a safe way of building protection and would either prevent COVID-19 infection or at least diminish the severity of the disease. It would also reduce the risk of continuing transmission and enhance herd immunity.





## HOW ACTIVE IS THE ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION PROGRAMME IN HOSPITALS, POST COVID-19? HOW SAFE IS IT TO GO FOR TRANSPLANT IN THESE TIMES?

Subsequent to the COVID-19 pandemic, guidelines have been developed by organ transplantation expert bodies and hospitals have put in place such protocols which have helped the organ donation and transplantation programme to become active once again. Both live and deceased organ donation and transplantation have been re-started in many parts of the country.

These guidelines and protocols have made it safe for individuals to get a transplant and get a new lease of life even during COVID-19 times.

However, COVID-19 appropriate safety must be followed in the strictest sense, especially by newly transplanted recipients and their family members living with them, as the recipients are highly immunocompromised in the initial few months post-transplant and therefore most vulnerable to infections, including COVID-19.

## CAN I PLAY GAMES AFTER TRANSPLANT?

Yes, you can have a normal and fully active lifestyle although contact sports like judo, karate, football, hockey, cricket, volleyball and basketball should be avoided.

Sports like badminton, table-tennis, billiards, golf, etc., may be pursued.

Live vaccines should be avoided, and all transplant recipients are advised to go for 'inactivated vaccines' as recommended by Indian Government bodies.

The vast population of transplant recipients in India have vaccinated themselves without any significant side effects. However, no trials have been undertaken in India, on transplant recipients to study the efficacy and safety.

There have been cases of recipients contracting the COVID-19 infection even after complete vaccination, just like in the general population; however, the severity of infection has been noticed to be milder.





### **WHAT DO I DO IN CASE OF NORMAL AILMENTS SUCH AS FLU / DENTAL PAIN / STOMACH FLU / THROAT ACHE, ETC.?**

Always check with your regular specialist kidney doctor first.

In case you have to consult with other doctors always make sure you inform them about your kidney transplant and the medicines that you are consuming.

Always check with your kidney doctor before consuming any medicines prescribed by the other doctors.

### **“NEVER SELF MEDICATE”**

It is important that you do not consume those medicines that may cause toxicity to your transplanted kidney and your kidney doctor is the best person to decide that for you.

### **CAN I CONSUME ALCOHOL OCCASIONALLY?**

Check with your transplant doctor. It may be fine to have a drink occasionally; however regularly drinking alcohol can raise your blood pressure, which can be dangerous for people with a kidney transplant.





## WHAT ABOUT PREGNANCY AFTER KIDNEY TRANSPLANTATION?

Women will have return of normal menstrual cycle after a successful transplant surgery.

After the transplant, women can become pregnant and have perfectly healthy babies. However, the process and risks associated must be discussed with your transplant doctor and well understood before proceeding.

Since some of the immunosuppression medications can cause birth defects, the doctors may stop or replace or change these medicines before and during the pregnancy and continuously monitor the progress. It is very important that the pregnancy should be planned, under joint consultation and monitoring by both kidney doctor and the gynaecologist.

## CAN I HAVE NORMAL SEX LIFE AFTER TRANSPLANTATION?

Some patients will experience a return of their libido (sex drive) and energy soon after a transplant. For some patients, resumption of sexual interest will be more gradual. This is quite normal. It is usual to resume sexual activity as soon as you feel well enough, and the wound is fully healed.

Some patients worry about “squishing” their kidney, but this does not happen.

For women, urinating after sex, is the best way to avoid a UTI (urinary tract infection).

It may be best to avoid pregnancy in the first few years after the transplant surgery and wait until your kidney function is stable.

Pregnancies fathered by male kidney recipients have been quite successful in India, since many years now, without any changes in immunosuppression routines.

**Remember**  
**Transplant is a Precious Gift**  
**It gives you a Second chance at Life Value it, Safeguard it**