

# Pre-Transplant Education

## Dental Care



### ***Why is dental care important in kidney transplant?***

Good dental care has been linked to better overall health. Our mouths are full of bacteria all the time. Bacteria can enter the blood from swollen gums or decaying teeth and cause an infection in your body. Medicines taken after transplant weaken the immune system making it easier for mouth and dental infections to happen.

### ***Can I still have regular dental care right before or after my transplant?***

You should see your dentist regularly for cleaning and checkups. If you are having a transplant you should have any dental work completed before your transplant. Once you have had a transplant, you should wait until your immunosuppression is lowered before having routine dental work. It is best to wait about 6 months after transplant. Emergency dental work can be done any time after transplant but you should tell your transplant team if this needs to happen.

### ***What about braces?***

If you have braces and they are due to come off, you should have them taken off before transplant. If this is not possible, wait for at least 6 month after transplant. If you need braces, have them put on prior to transplant or wait for 6 months after transplant to have them placed.

### ***How does having a kidney transplant affect my teeth and gums?***

After transplant you are on medicines that make it hard for you to fight infection. If you have poor mouth care, you are at greater risk of getting infections. Some medicines used after transplant can make your gums swell or cause mouth sores.

## ***How can I protect my teeth and gums after transplant?***

Brush your teeth at least twice a day. Floss your teeth gently. Use a toothbrush with soft bristles, a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride, and brush for at least 2 minutes each time. You should only brush your teeth with toothpaste. If you want to use any whitening agents or other products for your teeth, talk to the transplant team first. Get a new toothbrush at least every 3 months or when the bristles are frayed or worn. Drink lots of water and keep your mouth moist. Avoid high sugary foods. See your dentist every 6 months for checkups and cleaning.

Call your dentist if you notice chipped or cracked teeth, pain in your teeth or have an emergency with your teeth. Talk to the transplant team if you notice gum swelling, sores in your mouth, or white patches on your tongue or lining of your mouth. Let your dentist know what medicines you are taking. Let the transplant team if you are having any dental work done.

## ***Do I need antibiotics for dental care?***

You do not need antibiotics for dental care unless you have a heart problem and have been told by your heart doctor to use antibiotics before seeing the dentist.

## ***Can my medicines affect my teeth or gums?***

Some medicines such as amlodipine, sirolimus and cyclosporine are used after transplant. These medicines can cause the gums to swell, or cause mouth sores. You can help to keep swelling down by practicing good mouth care.

