

Pre-Transplant Education

Healthy Eating



How will my diet restrictions change after transplant?

Most people will have very few diet restrictions after transplant. The most important thing will be to eat a healthy, balanced diet.

How will my appetite change after transplant?

With your new kidney, you should not feel sick to your stomach any more. Your appetite usually returns. Food may taste better than it did before transplant. Right after transplant, you will be on high doses of prednisone which will increase your appetite and may even cause you to crave certain foods.

What are the risks of not following a healthy diet after a kidney transplant?

The two biggest risks are weight gain and developing diabetes.

Weight gain

Weight gain is very common after transplant. Weight gain can happen very quickly because of changes in your food choices, an increased appetite from prednisone and good kidney function. Prednisone causes increases in appetite, which can lead to eating more than your body needs. You will need to learn how to eat a healthy balanced diet. Without watching your intake, this weight gain can lead to obesity.

What are the risks of obesity (gaining too much weight)?

Obesity puts you at increased risk for high blood pressure which can hurt your kidney. It can put you at increased risk for heart disease, high cholesterol and liver disease. It puts you at increased risk for developing diabetes. It can also lead to obstructive sleep apnea. This means you have a hard time breathing while you sleep, you snore more and your breathing may pause.

Developing Diabetes

You are at risk for developing diabetes because of the changes in your appetite and your medicines.

Prednisone may make you crave more sweets or “junk food.” This can lead to high blood sugars which increases your risk of diabetes.

The immune suppressing medicines (tacrolimus and prednisone) can also increase your blood sugars and may lead to the development of diabetes.

If there is a family history of diabetes, you may have a higher chance of getting this after your transplant.

What are the risks if you have diabetes?

Diabetes puts you at increased risk for developing heart, eye, blood vessel and nerve problems.

If your blood sugars are not well-controlled, diabetes can also damage your transplant kidney.

How can I prevent obesity and/or diabetes after transplant?

Eat a healthy, balanced diet of whole foods, following the recommendations in the Canada Food Guide.

Live an active lifestyle to help prevent weight gain.

Keep all of your scheduled follow up appointments so the Kidney Health Team can monitor your growth, your cholesterol and your blood sugar.

Talk to the dietitian about the best choices for you after transplant.



Is there anything I should avoid eating or drinking after a transplant?

You must **AVOID** grapefruits, grapefruit juices or any drinks/foods containing grapefruit as this can change your drug levels.

Here's a list of food you should avoid or eat with caution.

Soft cheeses (feta, brie, Camembert)

Uncooked pate, meat spreads, cold cuts and smoked seafood

Unpasteurized milk

Unpasteurized fruit or vegetable juice/cider

Raw or undercooked eggs, including foods containing raw eggs (cookie dough!)

Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish or seafood

Raw seed sprouts

Wash all fruits and vegetables.

Limit sugary drinks and drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, pop). Never drink energy drinks.

Follow all boil water advisories. Drink bottled water if you live in a place where the water isn't safe.

Well water (private or public) can have bacteria and should be checked regularly.

Do not drink water directly from lakes or rivers.

Do not drink tap water or use ice cubes when traveling to certain countries with concerns about their water safety.

