

# Pre-Transplant Education

## Rejection



### ***What is rejection?***

Rejection occurs when your body sees your transplanted organ as a foreign object and tries to protect you by attacking it. Part of your body's job is to find and get rid of things that don't belong.

### ***Are there different types of rejection?***

Yes, there are two main types. One is called **cellular rejection** where white blood cells physically attack the transplant kidney. This is the more frequent type of rejection and is more treatable. The other type is **antibody mediated rejection** where your body develops a "memory" for the transplant kidney and can continue to attack it. It is more difficult to treat.

### ***Why is rejection important in kidney transplant?***

Rejection is important because it is one of the most common causes for a kidney transplant to fail. Rejection can often be prevented but can still happen even when you stick to your medical plan.

### ***What are the symptoms of rejection?***

Most often there are no symptoms of rejection and we only diagnose it once we do blood tests and/or a biopsy. Occasionally, people will have fever or pain over their transplant kidney as a sign of rejection.

### ***Can I have rejection even if I am feeling well?***

Yes, you often don't feel any different if you have a rejection. That's why it's important to get your blood tests done regularly, attend all appointments and have your protocol biopsies so that rejection can be diagnosed early.

### ***What happens to my kidney when I have a rejection?***

Cells from your blood invade the kidney and can cause harm. If there is enough harm or rejection isn't treated properly, this can lead to permanent kidney damage or even loss of the transplant kidney.

### ***How do I know if I have rejection?***

You or the doctors might think you have a rejection but the only way to diagnose this is to do a kidney biopsy. A kidney biopsy is a test when doctors look at a small sample of your transplant kidney under the microscope.

### ***Can you have rejection more than once?***

Yes.

### ***How is rejection treated?***

Rejection is usually treated with higher doses of steroid (prednisone). Sometimes other medicines that lower the immune system need to be increased or started to treat a rejection.

### ***Can I lose my kidney from rejection?***

Yes, this is one of the most common reasons that people lose their transplant kidney.

### ***How can I help prevent rejection?***

Taking your medicines on time, the same way, every day, and coming for regular transplant checkups and blood tests is the best way to prevent rejection.

