

# Pre-Transplant Education

## Sexuality



### ***Can I get pregnant after a kidney transplant?***

Yes, most women who have had a kidney transplant can still get pregnant, if they want to.

### ***Can I get someone pregnant after a kidney transplant?***

Yes, most men who have had a kidney transplant are still fertile (can get someone pregnant), if they want to. Some men after transplant may have problems getting an erection. We know this may be embarrassing to talk about. However there are things that can help so talk to the transplant team about this if you need to.

### ***What should I do if I want to have a baby?***

We recommend waiting until your kidney function is stable after a transplant (usually at least one year) before trying to get pregnant and until other things in your life (work, family etc.) are stable too. Some of your medicines are not safe to take during pregnancy (MMF and enalapril and some others) so you should never try to get pregnant until you have talked to your transplant team about switching to medicines that are safer to take during pregnancy. Your pregnancy will need to be followed by a doctor who has experience in high risk pregnancy.

### ***What are the risks if I get pregnant after kidney transplant?***

There is a higher risk of miscarriage, low birth weight babies and complications for women who have had a transplant. Some of the medicines you take after transplant are very unsafe to take during pregnancy (MMF and enalapril and some others) as they can cause very serious birth defects. Your kidney function may change during pregnancy and you may have a higher rate of elevated blood pressure or blood sugar issues during pregnancy.

### ***How can I prevent pregnancy after a kidney transplant?***

If you are having sex and don't want to be pregnant, it is very important to use birth control after your transplant. There are many options for birth control, including daily pills, shots given every 3 months and birth control that is long acting and placed inside your uterus. All of these can be safe to use after transplant, but you should discuss the specifics with your transplant team or primary care doctor. Other options such as condoms and using the withdrawal method are not good enough to prevent pregnancy for anyone. Do not rely on them as your only source of birth control!



## ***How can I prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) after a transplant?***

Some examples of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are chlamydia, gonorrhea, hepatitis B and C, HIV and HPV.

You can do a few things to prevent STIs, but there is always a chance of infection if you are having sex. After transplant you could have a more severe infection because of your transplant medicines.

Remember that STIs can be spread even without penetrative sex (penis in vagina or penis in rectum). Some STIs can be spread by oral sex or even skin-to-skin contact.

1. Do not have sex unless you trust your partner and feel comfortable that he or she is telling you the truth about their health and STI risk.
2. Ask your partner if he or she has any STIs **BEFORE** you have sex, and consider going for STI testing together **BEFORE** having sex.
3. Use a barrier such as condoms and dental dams for any sexual contact. This would include anything that involves your genitals or rectum touching someone else.
4. Report any signs of STIs (sores or warts, pain while peeing, new discharge from your vagina or penis) right away to your primary care doctor or transplant team.
5. There are some vaccines that can help prevent STIs such as HPV and hepatitis B. You can get these either before or after transplant depending on your age.

