



Understanding the Journey from Referral to Transplant Waitlisting

This resource can be reviewed during staff huddles to provide education about the transplant evaluation process and how patients can remain active and transplant ready.

Facts

As of March 2023, there were 88,719 patients waiting on the U.S. kidney transplant waitlist.¹ Patients who meet the transplant center criteria for the waitlist have received pre- and post-transplant education, have undergone extensive diagnostic testing, and attended several meetings with the kidney transplant multidisciplinary team.

The Referral Process

- The transplant referral and patient medical records are faxed /emailed to the transplant center. Additionally, the patient may self-refer to the transplant center.
- The transplant center contacts the patient and/or the facility to schedule the first appointment.
- The facility should work with the patient to ensure he or she has transportation to the transplant clinic appointment.

The Evaluation Process

- Potential recipients undergo a thorough medical and surgical evaluation, functional and psychosocial assessment, laboratory tests, and imaging studies.²
- The evaluation identifies medical and psychosocial factors that may influence transplant outcomes and determines whether transplantation is technically feasible.
- Upon completion of testing and assessments, the transplant approval committee will determine if a patient is medically and surgically eligible for waitlisting.

¹ Organ Procurement & Transplantation Network (OPTN). Available at <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/data/view-data-reports/national-data/#>.

² Contemporary Nephrology Nursing. 4th edition. American Nephrology Nurses Association. Pg. 1048–1049.



Diagnostic and Laboratory Testing

Diagnostic Imaging Studies	Laboratory Testing
Kidney ultrasound	Blood type: A, B, AB, and O Rh factor: positive or negative
Chest x-ray	Human leukocyte antigen (HLA) & panel reactive antibody (PRA)
CT scan of the iliac vessels	Blood chemistries
EKG	Complete blood count
Other cardiac test (e.g., echo & stress test)	Urinalysis and urine culture
Pap smear (female)	Serologies (e.g., hepatitis, HIV)
Mammogram (female)	Prostate specific antigen (male)
Colonoscopy	Liver function test
Other medical testing based on comorbidities	QuantiFERON Gold (i.e., TB blood test)

Dialysis Center and Patient Actions While Waiting

Dialysis Center Actions	Patient Actions
Draw monthly transplant labs as indicated.	Maintain dialysis treatment compliance.
Report all patient medical and psychosocial changes to the transplant center.	Report all medical and psychosocial changes to the dialysis center and the transplant center.
Provide guidance and support throughout the patient's transplant journey. Celebrate the wins.	Ensure the dialysis center and transplant center have current contact information.

Facilitate Communication

- How might we encourage patients to remain active on the waitlist?

Resources

End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) National Coordinating Center: [The Kidney Transplant Waitlist – 10 Steps You Can Take to Remain Active](#)

ESRD National Coordinating Center: [Meet the members of the Transplant Team](#)

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