

Kidney Transplant: Protecting Your Kidney From Infection

In the first six months after surgery, transplant patients have a high risk for getting an infection.

There are important things you can do to protect yourself from getting an infection after you have received a transplant, or stop one before it becomes too serious.

Some of the important things you can do are:

- Keep your hands clean. Use soaps and hand sanitizers that kill germs. Ask your caregivers, members of your healthcare team, family, and friends to do the same.
- Do not go to crowded places like crowded stores, movies, restaurants, and churches.
- Avoid undercooked meat, shellfish and raw foods, like sushi. Do not have grapefruit or grapefruit juice or a pomegranate or pomegranate juice, which can cause a drug interaction. The dietitian at your transplant center can help you understand which foods you should avoid—and why. The dietitian can also help you find a diet that is right for you.
- Get vaccinated. Your doctor will suggest certain shots to help prevent infection, like one for the flu, pneumonia, or Hepatitis B. These shots are important to help you stay well.
- Brush and floss your teeth every day and see the dentist regularly. Bacteria that are common in the mouth can cause infection that spreads to the rest of the body.
- Stay away from people who are sick or not feeling well.
- Avoid activities like swimming, yardwork, gardening, or taking care of animals—especially birds. Birds can carry diseases that can be given to people.
- Be involved in your care. Be sure to follow the directions for any medications you are prescribed. Do not skip doses of your medications. Even missing a single dose may make it more likely for you to have an organ rejection. The only time you should skip a dose is if your doctor or other healthcare team member tells you to do so.

If you think you have an infection, talk to your doctor or transplant coordinator right away, about how you are feeling and any signs or symptoms you have. If you cannot reach a member of your healthcare team, seek other medical care.



National Kidney Foundation. (2020, May 29). Food to Avoid After Transplantation. Retrieved from <https://www.kidney.org/atoz/content/foods-avoid-after-transplantation>.



3000 Bayport Drive, Suite 300, Tampa, FL 33607 | 844.472.4250 | 813.354.1514 fax | www.esrdncc.org

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