

Transplant Connection

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Keep your new kidney safe

Did you know that 36 percent of failed transplants happen because patients stop taking their immunosuppressant medications?

It's important you take all of your medications as prescribed and don't miss any doses. Some people believe that months or years of consistently taking a medication creates a reserve supply in the body that can be drawn upon in the event they miss a dose; this is not true. With each missed dose the level of medication in your body goes down, threatening your health.



Pill organizers can help you stick to your medication routine. Pharmacy manager Tom Montemayor is one of the Northwest Kidney Centers pharmacists who can answer your questions about your prescriptions.

Stick to a medication routine.

Your doctor chooses your medication dose frequency (once daily, twice daily, etc.) very carefully. Many immunosuppressant medications need to be taken twice a day. This requires planning and a routine.

Don't combine doses.

It isn't safe to combine doses so that you only have to take your pills once a day. The drug level may be too high right after you take the medication, and then too low by the end of the day. If the medication is prescribed twice a day, it is because the doses need to be taken 12 hours apart to be safe and effective.

Keep to your plan when you are sick.

Sometimes, when patients don't feel well, they may forget to take their medications. Don't fall into this trap! Having a routine can help you remember and stay on track.

If you miss a medication dose, take it as soon as you remember.

If it is already time for your next dose, do not double it. Simply take your scheduled dose as prescribed. In the case of a missed immunosuppressant dose, contact your transplant team for specific instructions.



Got the blues?

Sometimes patients experience bouts of depression as they adjust to their new lifestyle after a transplant.

Stephen Kringle and his wife, Karen, make walking a regular part of their routine. Stephen received a kidney transplant in August 2013.

You may feel sadness, anxiety, hopelessness or lack of pleasure in activity from time to time. These are normal responses to life stresses such as health changes, family issues or work-related stress. For many, these feelings are brief, lasting only a few days. But for some, these feelings can continue for several weeks or months, impacting ability to function. This may be a sign of depression.

In fact, 1 in 5 kidney transplant patients is at high risk for clinically significant depression. Sometimes depression is hard to recognize. You may have ongoing sadness, but you may also experience:

- a chronic lack of energy
- too much or too little sleep
- weight loss or gain
- restlessness or irritability
- difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- thoughts of death or suicide

Depression is very common and nothing to be embarrassed about. The good news is that it's treatable.

Get help

Help may come in the form of talking with your transplant social worker or a counselor, antidepressant medication, or turning to your friends and family for support. Regular exercise helps improve your mood and energy.

It is important to address your symptoms because patients who struggle with depression are less likely to follow their treatment plan, take pills, and get to medical appointments. Start by telling your doctor about your symptoms.

**If you feel in crisis and don't know where to turn, call the crisis line at
1-866-4-CRISIS or 211 (in King County).**

Is your dinner making you sad?

Along with your breakfast, lunch and snacks? Early research shows a diet high in processed, high-fat foods may worsen symptoms of depression. However, a Mediterranean diet high in fish and Omega-3 fats may improve symptoms. The Mediterranean way of eating is known for low amounts of saturated fat sources such as red meat and butter, and higher quantities of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, low-fat dairy and fish.

Use the samples at right for some ideas. In addition to diet, exercise has a powerful effect on reducing feelings of depression. Aim for 30 minutes of brisk walking at least 5 days per week.



Our friendly kidney-specialist pharmacists will answer your questions and fill prescriptions for all your medications, transplant-related or for other purposes. Delivery is free.

Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

206-343-4870

pharmacy@nwkidney.org

Breakfast: yogurt bowl

Mix together:

- 6-ounce container of low-fat Greek yogurt
- 1 cup fruit
- ¼ cup nuts
- 1 teaspoon honey

On the side:

1-2 hard-boiled eggs

Calories: 300, Fat: 5 grams, Saturated fat: 2 grams

Snack ideas

- Nuts with fruit, like walnuts with apple wedges or pecans with peach slices
- 1 tablespoon cream cheese on celery or whole wheat cracker topped with a cucumber slice
- English muffin toasted with 2 tablespoons grated cheese and tomato slices

Calories per snack: 200, Fat: 6 grams, Saturated fat: 3 grams

Lunch: veggie sandwich

- 2 slices 100% whole grain bread
- 1 tablespoon hummus or pesto spread on each slice
- ¼ of an avocado, sliced
- Cucumber slices
- Lettuce
- Tomato slices
- Dash of pepper

Side of apple slices dipped in 1 tablespoon peanut butter

Calories: 550, Fat: 24 grams, Saturated fat: 4 grams

Dinner: salmon and sides

- 1 small sweet potato, sliced, drizzled with olive oil, sprinkled with cinnamon and baked at 400 degrees for about 20-30 minutes or until tender when pierced with a fork
- 3-4 ounces of salmon baked with garlic and lemon until flaky, in a separate pan from the potato
- ¾ cup vegetables such as broccoli, asparagus or zucchini, drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with garlic powder
- Side salad with cucumbers, tomato and 1 teaspoon oil and vinegar dressing

Calories 500, Fat: 25 grams, Saturated fat: 5 grams



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Pharmacy: 206-343-4870 or 1-800-947-8902

Northwest Kidney Centers promotes the optimal health, quality of life and independence of people with kidney disease through patient care, education and research.

Mark your calendar!

Nov. 1

Northwest Kidney Centers Gala,
5:30 p.m., Hyatt Regency Bellevue

Nov. 13

Living Well with a Transplant
class, 1:30 p.m., 700 Broadway.
Register at 206-292-2771, ext. 1082.



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It's flu shot time!

As a transplant patient, you are more at risk for complications from the flu. Your body isn't able to fight infection as well because of the immunosuppressant medications you need to take. It's important to get a flu shot every year to protect yourself, your family, your friends and those around you.

Common myths about the flu vaccination:

"I got a shot last year, so I don't need one again this year."

False. Flu shots only protect you for about 6 months (one flu season), so you need a shot every year. Also, the vaccine changes year to year to protect against different types of flu virus.

"Getting the flu isn't that serious."

Wrong! Each year 36,000 Americans die from the flu, and 200,000 are hospitalized. As a transplant patient, you are at higher risk because your body's ability to fight infection is reduced.

"The flu shot can cause the flu."

No, that's impossible, because the flu shot contains only killed virus. (Nasal spray vaccine for flu has live virus and should not be given to transplant patients.)

"Only elderly people and people with health problems really need to get vaccinated."

Wrong again. The vaccine is recommended for everyone older than 6 months. Young people can have severe illness, and if everyone is vaccinated, the flu won't spread. Make sure your family gets flu shots, too.