

Transplant Connection

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Under pressure

Why your blood pressure matters

Did you know high blood pressure (hypertension) is very common in kidney transplant patients? It may harm your transplanted kidney or cause heart or blood vessel disease – and that could affect your long-term survival.

What's blood pressure?

It's a measure of the force, or pressure, of blood moving against artery walls.



SYSTOLIC

Force when the heart is pumping during a heartbeat.

DIASTOLIC

Force when the heart is resting between beats.

The narrower the blood vessel and the greater the volume of blood, the higher the pressure. High pressure damages the walls of your blood vessels so they get narrow and clogged. Your heart may struggle to pump harder against the pressure.



Transplant recipient Marlene McKiness and her husband, Adrien. Marlene's transplant was in 1987.

Treating and managing blood pressure

Managing your blood pressure can save your life. The ideal blood pressure for you as a kidney transplant patient is 140/90 or lower, based on your doctor's advice.

Treating and managing blood pressure can be hard, but you can do it through:

- ✓ Medications
- ✓ Lifestyle changes
 - Reducing salt
 - Exercise
 - Not smoking
 - Weight loss

All of these things will help keep your blood pressure where it needs to be. Work with your doctor to make a plan that fits you.

Lower your blood pressure with exercise

One of the most effective ways to lower blood pressure is exercise. Exercise also helps reduce stress, improve heart health and control blood sugars. If you are pre-diabetic, exercise can reduce the risk that you'll get diabetes.

To see health benefits, experts encourage physical activity 30 minutes each day, 5 days a week. You don't have to do it all at once. Starting slowly is better than staying in your chair. This guide can help you get started.

Week	Days (per week)	MINUTES			Total
		Warm up (slow)	Push (brisk)	Cool down (slow)	
1	3	5	5	5	15
2	3	5	7	5	17
3	3	5	9	5	19
4	3	5	11	5	21
5	4	5	13	5	23
6	4	5	15	5	25
7	4	5	18	5	28
8	4	5	20	5	30
9	5	5	23	5	33
10	5	5	26	5	36
11	5	5	28	5	38
12	5	5	30	5	40

Be patient with yourself.

This is only a guide and some weeks you may have to repeat what you did the previous week.

Track your progress.

You can use an app on your phone such as CardioTrainer, RunKeeper or mapmywalk.

Plan for bad weather.

- 👍 Walk at a shopping mall or a community center with an indoor track.
- 👍 Walk at home with exercise DVDs.
- 👍 Invest in a treadmill at home or join a gym.
- 👍 Use an umbrella and rain gear!

Blood pressure medications

Along with diet and exercise, medications are important to reduce high blood pressure. Your doctor may choose one or more blood pressure medications for you based on your overall medical condition and the severity of your high blood pressure.

Certain blood pressure medications are especially beneficial for diabetics. Others suit people who have had a heart attack. Even your ethnicity may help determine which blood pressure medication is right for you.

- Take your blood pressure medication(s) exactly as prescribed. Hypertension is often called “the silent killer” because your blood pressure may be dangerously high even when you feel normal.
- Don't stop unless your doctor tells you to. Abruptly stopping your blood pressure medication may cause a dangerous increase in blood pressure.
- Properly use a blood pressure monitor to see how you are responding to your medications. (See tips on next page.) Report the results to your transplant team.
- Beware of side effects. Talk with your doctor if you have any symptoms.

Long-term blood pressure control is vital to the health of your kidney transplant and to your survival. Take your medications, monitor your blood pressure and report concerns to your transplant team.

Don't forget about sodium!

Reducing the salt you eat will help control your blood pressure.

- Your goal is less than 2,000 milligrams of sodium per day.
- One teaspoon of table salt contains 2,300 milligrams.
- Beware these high-salt items: processed foods, deli meats, canned soups and canned veggies.
- Read nutrition facts online before you eat out; one meal at a restaurant can be a day's worth of sodium!



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.

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Transplant recipient Bryan Rush volunteers for Northwest Kidney Centers and has advocated in Olympia and Washington, D.C. for legislation in support of kidney patients.



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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!

May 14, July 9 or Sept. 10:

Living Well with a Transplant,
1:30 p.m., 700 Broadway, Seattle

May 14:

Breakfast of Hope, 7:30 a.m.,
Westin Seattle

Nov. 14:

Discovery Gala, 5:30 p.m.,
Hyatt Regency Bellevue



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Take your blood pressure like a pro



Keeping her blood pressure under control helped former peritoneal dialysis patient Akemi Jia qualify for the kidney transplant she received in January 2014.

- ✔ Do not use caffeine, alcohol or smoke 30 minutes beforehand.
- ✔ Empty your bladder.
- ✔ Sit up straight, with your feet flat on the floor.
- ✔ Sit quietly for 5 minutes.
- ✔ A bare arm is best.
- ✔ Rest your arm on a table so that the cuff is level with your heart.
- ✔ Place the cuff two finger-widths above your elbow crease, on your non-fistula arm.
- ✔ Line up the tubing with your middle finger.
- ✔ Secure cuff so that one finger fits between the cuff and your arm.
- ✔ Take your blood pressure twice, 1 or 2 minutes apart.
- ✔ Keep a log of your readings and show your doctor.