

Transplant Connection

Volume 6, Issue 2 · Fall 2015

Are you ready?

For a transplant recipient, it's especially important to get ready in case of an emergency. Here's how:

Always have at least a week's worth of medication on hand. Your insurance allows you to refill prescriptions a few days before the next refill date (usually every 23 days). Consider keeping extra meds at work as well as at home.

Keep papers and phone numbers with you. Carry a current medication list and contact information for your doctors, friends and relatives. Some patients carry a letter from their doctor that explains their medical condition. Save pictures of your lists on your phone or email them to yourself as a backup.

Get a medical alert bracelet that identifies you as a kidney transplant patient. Bracelets are easier than necklaces for medical personnel to see in an emergency. Order forms are available at most pharmacies, or search online.

If you must leave home, take along pills and necessary information. If you go to a shelter, let the staff know right away that you are a transplant patient and have special medical needs.



Diane Nelson used peritoneal dialysis until her kidney transplant Feb. 12, 2012.

Supplies everyone should have at home:

- ✓ Food for 3-5 days (items that do not need refrigeration or cooking)
- ✓ Can opener (non-electric)
- ✓ Flashlight, battery-operated radio, extra batteries
- ✓ Candles and matches in waterproof container
- ✓ First aid kit, sharp knife and scissors
- ✓ Paper towels
- ✓ Hand sanitizer
- ✓ Whistle to signal for help
- ✓ Moist wipes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- ✓ Gallon jugs of distilled water (one gallon per day per family member)
- ✓ Bleach (plain unscented) and eyedropper for purifying water (use 16 drops per gallon of water)

For more information on preparing for a disaster, check out www.ready.gov, the Federal Emergency Management Agency preparedness website.



Angela Pappas got her kidney transplant
July 23, 2011.

Is this still good?

As a transplant patient, you need to be extra careful to avoid foods that can make you ill.

Eating raw, undercooked or spoiled foods can give you food poisoning. Symptoms include: upset stomach, abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, fever and dehydration. If you are unable to keep fluids down and/or take your medications, call your doctor right away.

Remember the 2-hour rule: foods should not be kept at room temperature for more than 2 hours. The warmer the room, the less time food can safely sit out.

For more tips, visit www.foodsafety.gov.

Food Item	Cooking temperature (in Fahrenheit)	Refrigerator storage time (40°F or below)
Leftovers, casseroles, soups	165°	3-4 days
Ground meats (beef, poultry, pork, sausages)	165°	1-2 days
Chicken and turkey	165°	1-2 days
Beef, pork, lamb	145°	3-5 days
Fin fish (salmon, cod, trout, etc.)	145°	1-2 days
Shellfish	Cook until white and/or the shell opens	1 day
Boiled egg	Firm white and yolk	1 week
Egg dishes	160°	2-3 days
Deli/lunch meats (if on immunosuppressant medications, opt to toast your sandwich)	165°	Opened package 3-4 days; unopened package 2 weeks
Salads: egg, tuna, chicken, macaroni	Keep cold dishes below 40°	3-5 days



Medication safety while traveling

The leading cause of transplant rejection is forgetting or skipping medications. At home, you have a routine for taking pills, but away from home with a different schedule it's easier to forget.

- ✓ Bring your medication list and dosage schedule.
 - With a change in routine (and possibly a change in time zone), taking the right medication at the right time can be a challenge.
 - If you should need medical care away from home, you'll need an accurate list. Include the name, strength and directions for each medication, as well as the names and contact numbers of your doctors. Store your medications in their original containers—the bottles have all this information.
- ✓ Pack enough meds for the length of your trip, plus a few days more in case of delay.
 - Some insurance allows an extra “vacation supply” of medications. Check with your plan.
 - If your insurance does not have that benefit, do this: refill your prescriptions when you have a 5- to 7-day supply remaining. Within a couple of months, you'll have an extra supply to use for travel, or during a disaster or emergency.
- ✓ If you fly, keep medications in your carry-on bag, NOT your checked luggage. Checked luggage can be lost, stolen or delayed.

Safely dispose of old medications

At some point, you'll find yourself with unwanted or unneeded medications crowding your medicine cabinet. They are a safety hazard and environmental problem.

They can poison children, the elderly and pets, or even you.

Drug abusers may target your old medications. Most abusers of medicines, including teens, get the drugs from a friend or relative, often without their knowledge.

They can cause pollution if disposed of incorrectly, such as flushing down the toilet.

The best way to dispose of old medications is through take-back programs at pharmacies and law enforcement offices. Find one near you at www.takebackyourmeds.org.

If there are no take-back facilities near you (and the medication has no specific disposal instructions), mix it with used coffee grounds or kitty litter and seal it in a can or bag. Place in your trash.

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

Refill your prescription online at www.nwkidney.org/pharmacy.



www.nwkidney.org
pr@nwkidney.org
 206-292-2771



Join us on Facebook and Twitter.
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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. 14, 2015

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

May 5, 2016

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



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You have a hand in infection control



Did you know that 80 percent of all infections are transmitted by touch? As a transplant patient, you have an immune system that is suppressed and your risk of infection is higher. Infection is the second leading cause of death for transplant patients.

Simple hand washing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and stay healthy.

Wash your hands throughout your day. Think of all the things you touch that others have too – doorknobs, handrails, shopping carts, money, phones, keypads. Wash after you use the restroom, after contact with blood or body fluids, before and after eating and preparing food, and after touching animals.

It is also important that medical staff caring for you are washing their hands.

- ➔ **Ask your doctor and care team if they washed or gelled their hands.**
- ➔ **Speak up if you see staff members have not gelled or cleaned their hands before providing care.**

Clean hands save lives. Preventing infection is everyone's responsibility.