

Transplant Connection

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Keep it shady — Too much sun can be dangerous for organ transplant recipients

People with a transplanted kidney are more than 50 times more likely to develop skin cancer. Limit your exposure, check your skin regularly and follow up with your doctor as appropriate.

Steps to reduce your cancer risk

Daily sun protection

- Use sunscreen with SPF30 or higher.
- Wear protective clothing—long sleeved shirts and long pants are best. You can even buy clothes that have built-in SPF.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat. Baseball caps do not protect your ears, a common area for skin cancer.
- Avoid sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Don't stay in the sun for long periods of time, even with sunscreen.
- Do not use a tanning bed.

Monthly self-examination

- Do a self-exam of your entire body in a brightly lit room with a mirror or two. If needed, get help checking your back. If you notice pink patches or spots, scaly growths, bleeding areas or changing moles, tell your doctor right away.

Skin examination by a doctor

- Soon after your transplant, have your doctor perform a complete skin examination. Schedule such an exam each year.

When exercising outdoors

- Use a water-resistant sunscreen. Reapply sunscreen every two hours and after swimming or sweating.



Longtime Northwest Kidney Centers volunteer Dawn Marsh wears a hat for sun protection. She was on dialysis at Northwest Kidney Centers before receiving a kidney transplant almost 20 years ago.

Our pharmacists know kidneys

Our friendly pharmacists can answer 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



Kidney transplant recipient Marlene McKiness cuts the ribbon to start the National Kidney Foundation's Seattle walk in March. Northwest Kidney Centers was a primary sponsor of the event.

Every day has 1,440 minutes – can you find 30 for exercise?

You can add years to your life by being active and staying in shape. Try to get 30 minutes of brisk exercise five days a week.

Why love exercise

- Strengthens your heart
- Lowers your blood pressure
- Lowers “bad” cholesterol while raising the “good”
- Decreases the risk of breast and colon cancer
- Strengthens bones
- Helps with depression and stress
- Helps prevent or control diabetes

Are you out of shape?

- Start slowly and increase gradually. Even a few minutes is better than no minutes at all.
- If you are weak or have trouble walking, ask your doctor about physical therapy.

Stay with it

- Write it down; keep a record of your accomplishments.
- Try using a pedometer – aim for 10,000 steps a day.
- Exercise with a friend or in a group.
- Have a plan for bad weather, such as walking at an indoor mall, using exercise DVDs at home or joining a gym.

Take it to the next level

- Add more time and increase your effort.
- Add muscle strengthening, flexibility and balance exercises.



Transplant recipient Damo Saho checks a label.



Common drugstore purchases may be hazardous for you

Many over-the-counter (OTC) medications or herbal supplements can cause problems for transplant patients. Be extra careful taking an OTC medication to treat aches and pains, an upset stomach or cold symptoms.

Check in before starting a new medication

Ask your transplant team before you take something new, and then read the label closely. Avoid NSAIDs, or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen (Motrin and Advil). Also avoid decongestants with pseudoephedrine and phenylephrine (Sudafed and Sudafed PE).

Beware of herbal products

Just because a product is natural does not mean it is safe. The Food and Drug Administration has not tested them all for effectiveness, purity, side effects or drug interactions. Some can threaten your transplant. Avoid Saint John's wort, grapefruit seed extract and herbal diuretics or "water pills."

Never treat a fever by yourself

Contact your transplant team immediately if you have a fever. It could be a sign of serious infection or transplant rejection.

Change your lifestyle to feel better

Many transplant medications cause side effects, such as upset stomach, constipation or diarrhea. Talk with your transplant team about ways you can change your diet to reduce the number of OTC medicines you use to treat these side effects.

80%

**OF ALL INFECTIONS
ARE PASSED ON THROUGH TOUCH**

Clean hands save lives

As a transplant patient, you have a suppressed immune system and your risk of infection is higher. Simple hand washing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and stay healthy.





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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.

Managing your blood pressure

Lifestyle changes can have a big impact on your blood pressure.

- Reduce salt
- Don't smoke
- Exercise
- Lose weight



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Travel without worrying about your meds

When you're away from home, it's easier to forget your routine. Forgetting or skipping medications is the leading cause of transplant rejection. For a safe and enjoyable trip:



Transplant recipient Chelsea Brazier packs her bag. Previously she dialyzed at our Renton clinic.

Bring your medication list and schedule with you. Your list will be important if you need medical care on your trip. Include the name, strength and directions for each medication, as well as the names and contact information for your doctors.

Pack extras. Bring more than enough for your trip in case of delays. If your insurance does not have a vacation supply benefit, you probably can refill when you still have a 5- to 7-day supply, and save up to cover your trip.

Keep medications in your carry-on bag. Checked luggage can be lost, stolen or delayed.

Store medications in their original labeled containers. Original bottles include the medication names, strengths and directions, as well as contact information for your doctor and pharmacy.