

Kidney Transplant: Am I a Candidate?

Over 17,000 kidney transplants take place in the U.S. each year. However, there are currently over 122,000 people waiting for a new kidney and relying on dialysis while they wait.

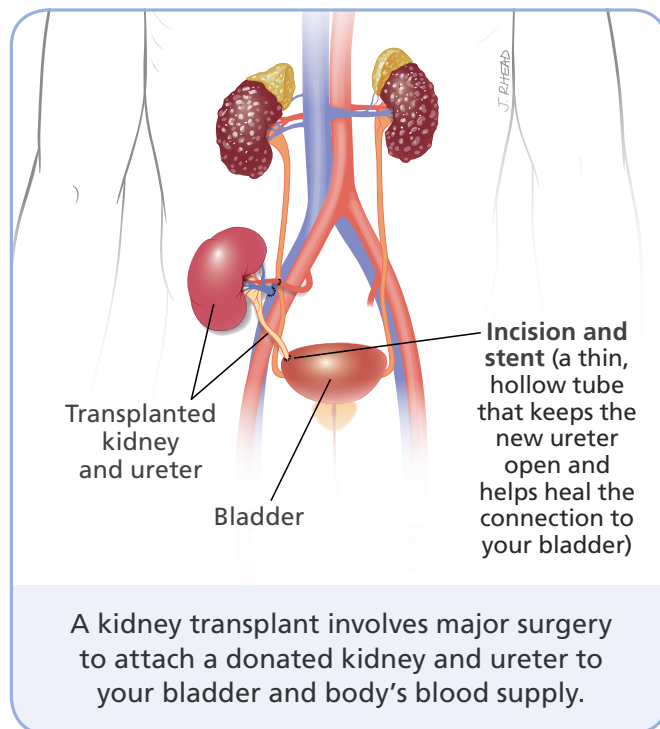
If you are interested in having a kidney transplant, you will need to:

- Carefully consider the potential benefits, risks, and complications (see below)
- Qualify medically (see below)
- Understand the transplant process, including donor options, time, and financial requirements (see page 2)

Do I qualify medically?

You **MIGHT** not be able to have a kidney transplant if you are over 70 or have one of these medical issues:

- Failure of your lungs to work properly
- An organ (other than a kidney) that is not getting necessary blood flow
- Bleeding in your intestinal tract or active peptic ulcer disease (a sore in the stomach lining or upper intestine)
- Disease of the heart or blood vessels
- Abnormal blood clotting
- Birth defects involving organs other than kidneys
- Active cancer
- Severe, permanent brain damage

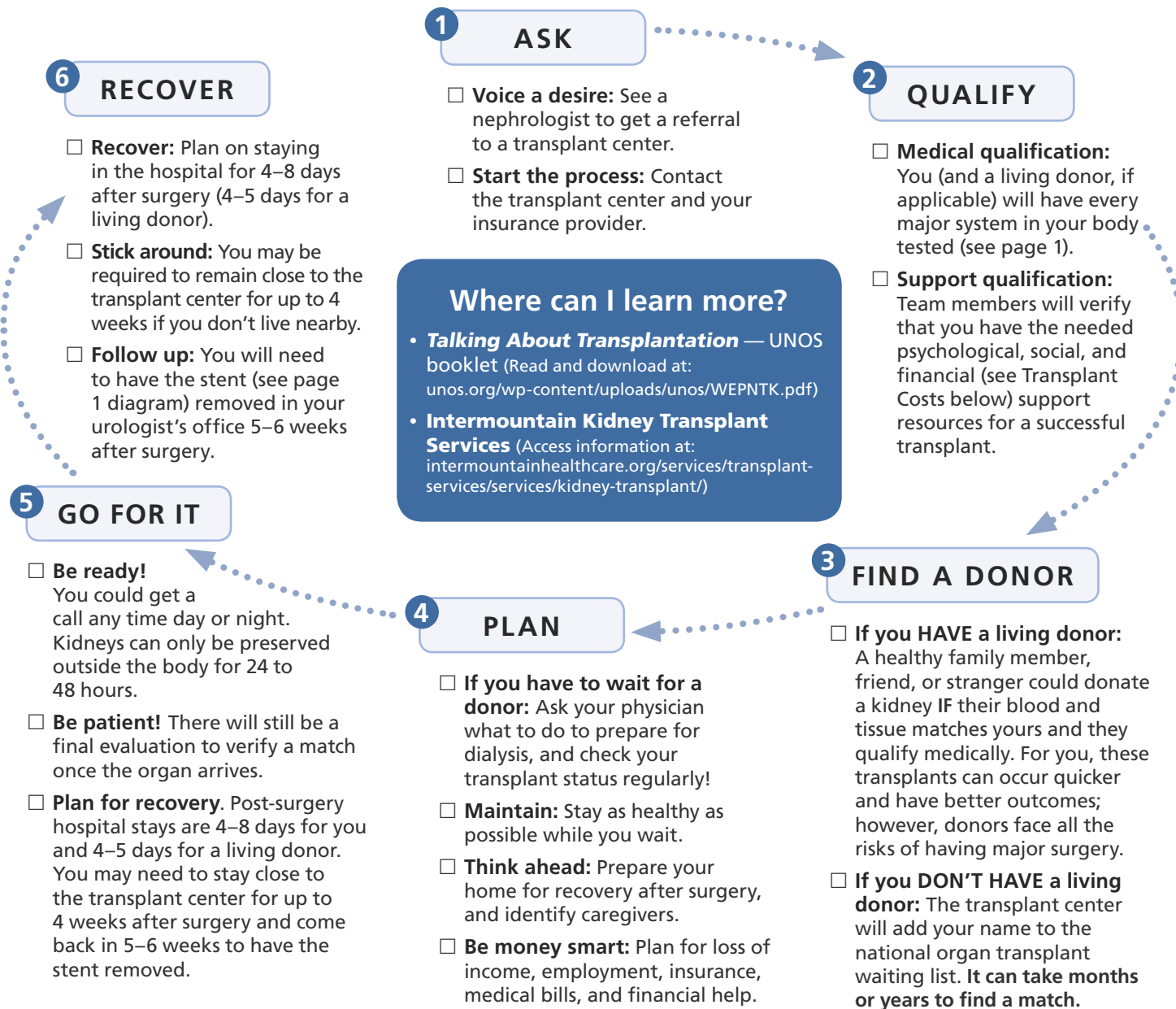


- An active infection or HIV
- Current alcohol or substance abuse
- Tobacco use (within 3 months before transplant)
- Obesity — a body mass index (or BMI) over 35
- A history of not following doctors' instructions about your care plan, medications, and keeping appointments
- Uncontrolled or untreated, severe mental health issues

Potential benefits	Risks and potential complications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to return to near normal health AFTER surgery; no dialysis needed • Better chance of living longer than with ongoing dialysis • Best outcomes (when you have a living donor) • Surgery covered by Medicare, VA, Medicaid, and most health insurance plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often lengthy wait times for a qualified donor (and being on dialysis while you wait) • Risks that go with having major surgery • Costs and side effects of anti-rejection medications you will take for life • High risk of developing skin cancer (65 times more likely than others) • Needing blood draws 3 times each week for several weeks • Risk of your body rejecting the transplanted kidney and having to go on dialysis

What is the transplant process?

There are several steps involved in the process that are critical to your transplant success. Understanding these steps will help you determine if a kidney transplant is right for you. The diagram below gives you an at-a-glance look at what to expect. **Check the boxes within each phase as you move through the process.**



Transplant Costs

What costs insurance companies cover for transplant may vary depending on your insurance and the transplant center you select. Non-covered costs can include candidate testing and evaluation; surgical and other medical costs for a living donor not covered by your insurance; follow-up care and lab tests, anti-rejection medications (these and other medications can easily exceed \$10,000 per year); food, lodging, and transportation near a transplant center; and loss of income during the process.

For a complete picture of non-covered expenses, talk with your insurance carrier as well as transplant social workers at _____.

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