

HEALTHY LIVING WHILE YOU WAIT

MANAGING STRESS

Waiting for a transplant can trigger feelings of stress and anxiety. The following strategies can help you manage your stress:

Take care of yourself. Eat right, and follow a daily exercise program. Your transplant team will create a diet and exercise plan for you based upon your personal medical needs.

Stay active. To the best of your ability keep up with your studies, work, and leisure activities. Just because you're waiting doesn't mean you have to put everything else on hold!

Communicate. If you feel depressed or uneasy, talk it out. Your Transplant Coordinator can answer your questions, ease your fears, and help you cope. Your social worker is more than a good listener! He or she can help you find the best way of coping.

Find a creative outlet. If you have a hobby, enjoy it to the fullest. It will distract you and help you relax. You may want to pursue a new interest – something that will absorb your energy and leave you feeling fulfilled. Ask your doctor or Transplant Coordinator for guidelines on the kinds of activities that are right for you.

Spend time with family and friends. Good company will take your mind off waiting and enrich your life. Laughter really is the best medicine.

Learn relaxation techniques. Reading, listening to music, or relaxation tapes can work wonders. If you are visually impaired, your local library and many bookstores have extensive collections of audiotapes. Your social worker can help you to find information about relaxation techniques.

Try to keep it all in perspective. Keep looking down the road. Picture yourself living a life of good health, filled with new opportunities.

KEEPING ACTIVE WHILE YOU WAIT

The effects of a compromised kidney, or liver – may leave you feeling a decrease in appetite, fatigue, or depressed. All can take a toll on your ability to perform activities of daily living. This reduced activity can lead to a decrease in strength, flexibility, and endurance, and eventually to a decrease in cardiopulmonary (heart and lung) performance.

It is the physical therapist's goal to design an activity program that will help you avoid these complications. The program will consist of exercises geared to maximize your strength, flexibility, mobility, endurance, and breathing.

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EATING HEALTHY

Pre-kidney transplant

The proper diet for pre-kidney transplant is the same as for patients on dialysis with end-stage kidney disease. General guidelines include limiting protein, sodium, potassium and sometimes fluids. The nutritionist will provide you with a diet specifically tailored to your individual needs to help you maintain your nutritional status while waiting for your transplant.

Pre-liver transplant

Fatigue, decreased appetite, nausea, vomiting, and food sensitivity and intolerance are sometimes associated with liver disease. Throughout the progression of the disease, development of ascites (increased fluid in the abdomen), hepatic encephalopathy (disorientation), increased diarrhea (from medications), and edema (fluid retention of the feet and legs) may leave you feeling fatigued and drained of vitamins, nutrients, and energy.

The goal of nutritional management of liver disease is to help you maintain or improve your nutritional status, regulate your calorie intake, and consume appropriate amounts of protein (without contributing to hepatic encephalopathy). The nutritionist will provide you with a diet individually tailored to meet your nutritional needs and help you stay as healthy as possible while waiting for your transplant.