

Discharge Instructions After an Organ Transplant



You had an organ transplant. A doctor replaced a diseased organ with a healthy one from a donor. Below are ways to take care of yourself after your transplant. It includes ways to protect yourself from infection.

After a transplant, you take medicines to change your immune system. This is so it won't reject the new organ. This protects the new organ. But it increases your risk for infection. You will need to follow the guidelines below to help prevent infection. You may need to do this for the rest of your life.

Activity

- Get plenty of rest. Take breaks between activities.
- Increase your activity slowly. Start with light exercise, such as walking.
- Ask your healthcare provider when it's safe to drive a car.
- Don't swim until your provider says it's OK. Then wear ear plugs and nose plugs. Don't swim in lakes or streams.
- Don't do yard work until your provider says it's OK. This includes gardening, mowing the lawn, and raking leaves. Then, use a mask when doing these activities.
- Ask your provider when you can go back to work or school.
- Don't ride a bike until your healthcare provider says it's OK.

Skin care

Wash your hands often. Use soap and clean, running water. Wash them:

- Every time you use the bathroom
- Before you take care of your incision
- Before you take care of your central venous catheter

Make sure to:

- Follow all instructions for caring for your incision.
- Not get the central venous catheter site wet. Cover it with waterproof material before you take a shower.
- Ask your healthcare provider if sun exposure is safe.

Check your incision for signs of infection. These include:

- Redness
- Heat
- Pain
- Fluid leaking

Keep your home clean

- Clean floors, carpets, furniture, and countertops regularly. Use a standard cleaning solution that is antibacterial.
- Make sure your bathroom is clean.
- Wash your hands after handling trash.

More ways to help prevent infections

- Ask your healthcare provider if it's safe to kiss or have close, intimate contact. Ask when you can resume sexual contact.
- Wear a mask when you walk through areas with germs or dirt. This includes healthcare facilities. It also includes construction areas, windy places, or any area with dust or fumes.
- Ask your provider if it's safe to use cosmetics, contact lenses, tampons, or douches.
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables well before eating them.
- Limit contact with animals. If you have contact with an animal, wash your hands right away. Don't touch pet urine or feces. Don't clean litter boxes, cages, or aquariums.
- Don't smoke or use tobacco. Don't let other people smoke in your home.
- Don't have contact with chemicals and fumes. This includes gasoline, fuel oil, paints, bug or weed killers, and fertilizers.
- Don't use a portable humidifier or vaporizer.
- Stay away from people with illness that can spread. This includes colds and the flu. It also includes measles, chickenpox, herpes, pinkeye, coughs, and sore throats.

Taking medicines

- Take your medicines exactly as directed. Don't take any other medicine, over-the-counter medicines, supplements, or herbs unless your provider says it's OK.
- Tell your provider if you have any side effects.

Asking for help

Let your healthcare provider know if you or other family members need help. Managing your transplant can be stressful for you and your family. You will all be dealing with the physical, emotional, and financial issues that a transplant can cause.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as advised
- Some bleeding that you can't control
- Vomiting
- Small amount of blood in your stool

- Some black or tarry stools
- Diarrhea that does not stop after 2 loose stools
- Pain or cramping in your stomach
- Less urine (for a kidney transplant)
- Irregular blood sugar, or trouble controlling blood sugar (for a pancreas transplant)
- Mild shortness of breath
- Severe headache
- Confusion
- Mild dizziness or lightheadedness
- Signs of infection in the incision
- Feeling very tired
- Swelling in your legs, feet, hands, or stomach that gets worse

Call 911

Call 911 if you have any of the these:

- A lot of bleeding that you can't control
- Vomiting blood
- A lot of blood in your stool
- A lot of black or tarry stool
- You feel very dizzy or lightheaded
- Loss of consciousness
- Chest pain
- Very short of breath

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