

Kidney Transplant: Returning Home

After you've had a kidney transplant, you can do a lot at home to help yourself have a safe recovery.

Here's what to expect.

Your belly and side may be sore for a few weeks.

You may be numb around the place where the surgeon made the cut.

It may hurt to cough or take deep breaths.

It can help if you hold a pillow over the incision site to support your belly.

It may take a few weeks before you get your energy back.

So get plenty of rest.

Moving around a little helps too.

Try to do light activity, like short walks.

Do more a little at a time, as you feel better, but avoid hard exercise and heavy lifting.

After your surgery, your new kidney may start working soon, or it may not begin to work well for a few weeks.

You'll have to take medicine that keeps your body from rejecting the new kidney.

Be sure to talk to your care team about any problems or side effects from the medicine.

Follow the instructions for taking it, along with any other instructions you were given about eating or activity.

It's important that you take steps to avoid infections.

The best thing everyone in the house can do is wash their hands.

And when you are healthy enough for visitors, ask them to visit only if they're healthy...

and to wash their hands.

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You may shower if your doctor says it's okay.

After you shower, pat dry any incisions. Use warm water and nothing else to keep the area clean.

While you're healing, call your doctor if you have any problems or concerns such as signs of infection like... a fever... increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness...

pain when you urinate... a change in the amount of urine you make...

blood or pus in your urine... or red streaks leading from the incision.

Many people feel sad or "blue" after their kidney transplant.

Call your doctor if you have these or other signs of depression.

Treating depression early can help you recover, heal, and feel better sooner.

Recovery and healing take time, and everyone recovers at a different pace.

So be kind to yourself.

And you can always call your care provider when you have any questions.