Congratulations!

Congratulations to our new kidney transplant recipients! This quarter we have done six successful transplants. We are pleased that everyone has done well. Keep up the good work!

Delores Carter, Chattanooga, TN
Leonard McCrary, Chattanooga, TN
Douglas Kincaide, Trion, GA
Devaneda Brann, Chattanooga, TN
Joyce Lewis, Soddy Daisy, TN
Rebecca Gosnell, Rossville, GA

Live Life To Its Fullest
9 Easy Steps to a Longer Life

It has been proven that individuals who receive kidney transplants live longer and more fulfilling lives than those who remain on dialysis. The following steps are just a few ways you can get the most out of your transplant and be on your way to a longer life. By preventing or improving upon heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and bad habits, you can reduce your risk for disease and add many healthy, active years to your life.

#1 - Quit Smoking. Smoking has been associated with cancer (especially in transplant recipients with low immune systems), heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure. Periodically, Erlanger’s LifeStyle Center offers smoking cessation classes to assist you with quitting. Call (423) 778-9400 for information about upcoming classes. Need one more reason to quit? Second-hand smoke has also been related to cancer, so you could be jeopardizing your loved ones health as well.

#2 - Limit Alcohol Intake. Keep the drinking to a reasonable minimum. Studies have shown that a glass of red wine is good for the heart, although excessive alcohol intake can increase your risk of cancer and liver disease. Alcohol can also interfere with how well immunosuppressant medications work and their effectiveness.

#3 - Exercise 30 Minutes a Day. Exercise can be as simple as walking - one of the most relaxing forms of exercise you can do. Start slowly and increase activity as you gain more energy. You will quickly be rewarded with more energy the more you move. Remember, apply sunscreen and wear a hat and protective clothing to shield you from the harmful UV rays.

#4 - Eat Your Fruits and Vegetables. Five servings of fruits and vegetables are recommended daily. This time of year is a great time to find many flavorful fruits and vegetables. Always try to grab an apple or grapes instead of an unhealthy serving of chips or candy.

#5 - Try Whole Grains. Whole grain provides not only fiber but also vitamins, minerals, and high levels of antioxidants. Studies have shown that whole grains reduce the risk of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. A new study, published in 2006, shows that whole grains may lower triglycerides, improve insulin control, help weight management and slow the build up of arterial plaque.

#6 - Avoid Gaining Weight. Obesity has been linked to cancers and can cause or worsen diabetes and high blood pressure - both of which are major risk factors for heart disease. Weight gain can be hard to control especially when steroids are involved, but it can be minimized by combining healthy eating habits and regular exercise.

#7 - Socialize More. The journey through the transplant process can feel lonely at times. A transplant support group is available in our area for you to discuss experiences unique to you in an accepting environment. Spend time with family and friends. Consider socializing part of your wellness routine.

#8 - Laugh. Laughing can decrease stress hormones, relax the body,

Keeping Your Blood Pressure Under Control

Did you know that hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, is one of the most common cause of kidney failure that leads to dialysis or kidney transplants? Whether you were diagnosed prior to receiving a new kidney or after - due to immunosuppressant medications - the Kidney Transplant Office at Erlanger urges you to keep your blood pressure in check.

Hypertension is a serious disease with serious complications. Without proper control and monitoring, these complications can become a full blown health crisis and in some cases fatal. For kidney transplant recipients, the most alarming complication is if the uncontrolled high blood pressure damages the tiny blood vessels inside the kidney called glomeruli and the larger blood vessels surrounding the organ.

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An Erlanger Health System Newsletter for Kidney Transplant Recipients
Blood Pressure

In addition to affecting the kidney, high blood pressure may cause a host of complications including coronary artery disease, stroke, bone loss, insomnia and sexual dysfunction.

Without proper blood flow to the heart muscle, individuals are more susceptible for chest pain, irregular heart rhythm and even heart attack. High blood pressure, if not controlled, can also cause the heart to enlarge and go into heart failure.

Similar to the heart, your brain depends on an adequate supply of blood to function properly. If the vessels that carry blood to the heart and the brain are damaged, several problems may occur. A transient ischemic attack (TIA), also known as a ministroke, is one of the most common side effects. Having a ministroke can also serve as an indicator that you are at an elevated risk of having a stroke.

Vision can also be affected. The tiny vessels that supply the eyes with blood are very vulnerable and can, in turn, cause bleeding in the eye, blurred vision, and even loss of sight.

Again, controlling high blood pressure is essential in avoiding damage to newly transplanted kidneys. Anti-hypertensive medication, along with a balanced diet, reduced sodium intake and regular exercise can keep hypertension under control and your new kidney functioning at its best.

West Nile Virus: How to Protect Yourself this Summer

The West Nile Virus is an infections disease that is spread by infected mosquitoes. Many of those infected may experience mild symptoms, or none at all. Common symptoms include fever, headache, rash, and/or body aches.

There is a growing concern that immunosuppressed individuals, such as transplant patients taking immunosuppressant medications, are at an increased risk of developing more serious effects of the virus, such as inflammation of the brain and spinal cord.

There are no vaccinations yet to prevent the virus, but there are preventative measures that can be taken.

• Apply insect repellent when outdoors.
  • Avoid having standing water in flower pots, buckets or barrels.
  • Stay indoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

Insect repellent works by hiding the natural odor of the skin, making the skin seem unattractive to mosquitoes. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), repellents containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) or Picaridin (KBR 3023) have the highest degree of effectiveness.

Oil of lemon eucalyptus has been tested and found to provide similar protection. Remember, always reapply repellent after being bitten, sweating or getting wet.

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decrease high blood pressure, and burn calories. On the other hand, emotions such as anxiety, depression, and anger are all related to heart disease.

#9 - Keep Doctor Visits. The first year following your transplant, doctor visits are frequent to monitor for rejection and other complications that can be common after transplants. In addition, doctor visits remain crucial to screen for other diseases such as heart disease, bone disease, and cancer.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

It’s important to recognize those who are celebrating transplant milestones.

During this quarter, there are three recipients celebrating a 17-year anniversary; five celebrating 16 years, eight celebrating 15 years, seven celebrating 14 years, six celebrating 13 years, nine celebrating 12 years, three celebrating 11 years, five celebrating 10 years, eight celebrating 9 years, seven celebrating 8 years, three celebrating 7 years, two celebrating 6 years, three celebrating 5 years, six celebrating 4 years, seven celebrating 3 years, six celebrating 2 years, and six celebrating one year anniversaries.

* Due to privacy restrictions, names cannot be listed without written consent. However, you may contact Misti Thach at (423) 778-5508 to have your name listed in the future.

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