

## Activity

You have just had major surgery. You will have low energy and a lower level of strength. After you are out of the hospital, you should be able to take care of yourself dressing, bathing, eating, as well as walking every day.

It is very important to walk as much as you can to help rebuild your energy levels, control weight, prevent constipation, prevent joint and muscle weakness (especially if you are on prednisone) and contribute to your overall sense of physical well-being. Plan to rest frequently and listen to your body's cues. If you are tired, take a nap.

### Lifting, Sports and Driving

Do not do strenuous activity such as heavy lifting for at least 6 weeks after transplant. Do not lift anything greater than 10 pounds (about one gallon of milk) for at least 6 weeks, or as directed by your doctor. After 6 weeks, you may return to non-contact sports such as golfing, swimming and bowling. However, keep in mind that the transplanted kidney is placed close to the body surface, and that means it could be more easily injured during contact sports. We recommend that you check with the transplant office before you participate in any contact

sports. Avoid jarring activities such as speed boating, snowmobiling or horseback riding for at least 3 months.

Driving is usually allowed after 2 weeks or after you stop your pain medicine. You should be off pain medicine for 24 hours before attempting to drive. You will need a driver if you are having a procedure.

#### **Do not drive if:**

- You have blurred vision
- You are still in pain and/or needing pain medicine. You must be "pain free" before attempting to drive

### Returning to Work

If your job requires you to lift heavy objects you will need to be cleared by the transplant team. If you feel well, and the job does not require heavy lifting, you may return at 4 to 6 weeks after surgery. If you need a medical release for your employer, please tell your transplant team during business hours, or the clinic nurse when you are at a clinic appointment.

## Activity, continued

### Exercise

When you are allowed to begin an exercise program, you will need to work up to where you are exercising four to six times a week for at least 30 minutes. This is over a period of 6 months. The rule of thumb is start slowly, be consistent and stop if you experience chest pain, shortness of breath, nausea, rapid heart rate or faintness.

#### **Physical Benefits of Exercise**

- Lowers your risk of heart disease
- Tones and strengthens muscles
- Helps to build bone mass, while slows bone loss
- Improves sleep patterns
- Improves alertness/memory/retention
- Provides energy
- Controls weight
- Lowers your risk of diabetes

#### **Psychological Benefits of Exercise**

- Increases your sense of health and well-being
- Provides an increased feeling of well-being
- Lowers anxiety level
- Increases coping abilities for stress
- Improves self-esteem

### Sexual Activity

You may resume sexual activity 4 weeks after your transplant surgery. How quickly you return to your usual patterns will depend mostly on your recovery progress. Your sexual functioning may be affected by your transplantation and/or certain medicines. Some people avoid sexual activity because they are afraid of rejection or infection. If you have any of these fears, you may want to check with your transplant team. If you are sexually active and do not have a steady sexual partner, you must use condoms to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS, HIV, syphilis, herpes, hepatitis or gonorrhea.

You must use contraception to prevent unplanned pregnancy also. Don't be afraid to ask your doctor, nurse or transplant coordinator questions about this while you are hospitalized or during your clinic visits.