

Activity

You have just had major abdominal surgery. It is expected that your overall strength and stamina will be initially decreased. After you are discharged, you should be able to take care of your own activities of daily living (i.e. dressing, bathing, eating) as well as walking every day. It is very important to walk routinely to help rebuild your stamina, control weight, prevent constipation, prevent joint and muscle weakness (particularly if you are on Prednisone) and contribute to your overall sense of physical well-being. Plan for frequent rest periods and listen to your body's cues. If you are tired, take a nap.

Lifting, Sports And Driving

Please avoid strenuous activity such as heavy lifting for at least two months after transplant. This means do not lift anything that weighs more than 10 pounds (about one gallon of milk) for at least six to eight weeks. After two months, you may resume non-contact sports such as golfing, swimming and bowling. However, keep in mind that the transplanted kidney and/or pancreas is placed close to the body surface, and that means they 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 three months.

Driving is usually permitted after three to four weeks. Use common sense.

Do not drive if :

- You are experiencing blurred vision.
- You are still in pain and/or requiring pain medication. You must be "pain free" before attempting to drive.

Returning To Work

Patients with jobs requiring heavy lifting will not be able to return to work for two to three months. If you feel well, and the job does not require heavy lifting, you may return at four to six weeks after surgery. Please notify your transplant coordinator during business hours or the clinic nurse when you are being seen in clinic if you need a medical release for your employer.

Exercise

As mentioned earlier, exercise is essential to achieving health and well-being and begins while you are still in bed. Your nurse will instruct you to do leg and feet exercises to help push blood flow out of your legs, back up to your heart. When you are released to start an exercise program, you will need to work up to where you are exercising routinely three to four times per week for at least 30 minutes,

Activity, continued

over a period of approximately six 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

- Decreases your risk of heart disease
- Increases your sense of health and well-being
- Tones and strengthens muscles
- Helps to build bone mass (slows bone loss)
- Improves sleep patterns
- Improves alertness/memory/retention
- Provides energy
- Controls weight

Psychological Benefits of Exercise

- Increased feeling of well-being
- Decreases anxiety level
- Increases coping abilities for stress
- Improves self-esteem

Warm Up And Cool Down

It is important to always include a warm up and cool down when you exercise. These should include moving at least five to 10 minutes at a slow pace.

Starting Your Home Exercise Program

Exercise Schedule

Week	Sessions Per Day	Total Minutes Per Day
1	3-4	10-15
2	3	12-20
3	3	15-20
4	2	20-30
5	2	25-40

After Week 5, continue with exercise twice daily or progress to a single session.

Goal

Exercise 30 to 60 minutes three to six days a week for the rest of your life!

- Warm up by walking slowly
- Begin aerobic exercise
- Cool down by slowing pace
- Stretch

Always increase the amount of time before increasing the difficulty of the exercise.

Activity, continued

Slowly increase your exercise by adding one minute every other day as long as you are without warning symptoms (chest pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, etc).

Sexual Activity

You may resume sexual activity four 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 medications. 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, 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.