

Kidney Transplant

What is a kidney transplant?

A kidney transplant is a surgical procedure to transplant a healthy kidney from a donor into a kidney transplant patient.

Who can benefit from a kidney transplant?

Chronic kidney failure (otherwise known as end-stage renal disease) is the reason that patients will need to undergo a kidney transplant. At this stage the kidneys are no longer able to filter waste from the blood into urine. There are many different conditions that can result in kidney failure, including diabetes, kidney disease, underdevelopment of the kidneys, infection, inflammation and high blood pressure.

Procedure

You will be placed under general anesthetic during your kidney transplant. An incision is made in the lower abdomen and your new kidney grafted into the right or left side of the abdomen (a different location to the damaged kidneys), just above the hip bone. The blood vessels are then attached to the patient's main artery and leg vein. The ureter (tube that carries urine to the bladder) is then attached to the patient's bladder. The incision is then closed following the kidney transplant. The diseased or damaged kidneys are usually left in place unless they are likely to cause problems in the future.

Recovery period

You will be able to leave hospital between 1-2 weeks following kidney transplant surgery. Instructions will be given on taking your anti-rejection medication, and how to measure your temperature, blood pressure and urine output - which will need to be recorded. You will also be assigned a dietician and a social worker to help you progress into a daily routine on returning home and monitor your progress. Returning to work will vary depending on the nature of your job, but this is generally around three months following your kidney transplant. If you are looking to get pregnant you should wait for at least a year, but you will need to talk to your surgeon about this.

Risks

Complications involving a kidney transplant include rejection, bleeding, infection, development of certain cancers and diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol levels and bone disease.