

Medications

As we have talked about, your body will need medications to help recover and to maintain your kidney. It is important to take all of your medications as prescribed and your pharmacist will be a great resource for questions. Due to the nature of some of your medications, it is important that you talk with your doctors and pharmacist if you take anything over the counter such as cold and flu or headache medicine since this can also interact with your other drugs.

The main medications that you will need to maintain your kidney are immunosuppressants. Common immunosuppressant drugs include Prograf, Rapamune, Cyclosporin and Prednisone. [1] If you don't take these drugs, your body will reject the organ. Since these drugs suppress (weaken) your immune system you will be at additional risk to develop infections. Like any drug, there are side effects and they range from minor headaches, hand tremors, nausea to more severe issues such as increased blood sugar and high blood pressure. Your doctors and pharmacist will work together to minimize symptoms and make sure that you don't have any serious issues.

In addition to immunosuppressants you will also be prescribed other pain and infection control medications. Since immunosuppressants weaken your immune system you are more prone to infections. It is important that you take extra precautionary steps like hand washing, getting flu vaccinations, avoiding environments where others are sick and not eating raw foods.

A natural way to help speed your recovery is exercise. Your healthcare team will help you determine what is best for you, but starting off with walking is a good first step, literally. The better you take care of your body overall the better it will take care of your new kidney. Exercise will not only help control factors such as hypertension and obesity that contribute to kidney disease, but also exercise can help reduce some of the negative side effects of immunosuppressants such as osteoporosis and weight gain.[2]

[1] Duke University. After Kidney Transplantation. Retrieved from <http://www.dukehealth.org/repository/dukehealth/2010/02/04/12/08/29/9659/Kidney-TransplantationAfter.pdf> [1].

[2] Gordon Elisa J., Phohaska Thomas, Siminoff Laura A., Needed: Tailored Exercise Regimens for Kidney Transplant Recipients. *American Journal of Kidney Disease*. 45(4): 769-774. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1242115/> [2].

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[1] <http://www.dukehealth.org/repository/dukehealth/2010/02/04/12/08/29/9659/Kidney-TransplantationAfter.pdf>

[2] <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1242115/>