

Chapter 8: Lifestyle Considerations After Surgery

Guidelines

You will receive information about what you can and cannot do after surgery. The following is general information.

❑ Activity

- Follow your lifting restrictions.
- Walk as much as you can.
- Increase your physical activity as you are able.
- If you are not used to exercise, talk with your primary care provider about how to safely start once your nephrologist says it is OK to start.

❑ Returning to work

- You should be able to return to work 6 to 8 weeks after surgery. This depends on what you do, how your recovery is going and what your employer expects.
- If you have problems after surgery, your return to work may be delayed.
- If you received disability benefits because of kidney failure, you may no longer qualify for disability after transplant. If you have questions about this, talk with your social worker *before* transplant surgery.

❑ Diet

- You will see a dietitian before you get discharged from the hospital.
- Once your kidney is working, your diet needs will change. A transplant coordinator will talk to you about your needs at your clinic appointment.
- If you need to follow another type of diet (such as for diabetes or heart health), you will still need to follow those guidelines.

❑ Travel

- Do not travel for the first few months after surgery.
- Always keep extra doses of your medications with you when you travel in case you are delayed or miss a plane, train or bus.
- Keep a current medication list with you.
- Have your pharmacy phone number with you.
- **Always** pack your medications in your carry-on case when you fly.
- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizing gel to avoid infections.
- If you are traveling overseas, additional precautions may be needed.

❑ Sexual activity

- After surgery, you should have more energy and feel better. You can continue sexual activity when your incision is healed and you feel comfortable.
- **Women:** If you are planning a pregnancy after a transplant, talk with your nephrologist first. Some of your transplant medications can cause harm to an unborn child.
- **Men:** Talk with your nephrologist before you father a child.

❑ Family relationships

- Kidney failure and transplant can put stress on your family.
- Talk with your social worker if you or any family member want to learn about resources that can help with this stress.