

# Nutrition/Dehydration

## Nutrition

Your Guide to Eating Healthy After Organ Transplant

These diet instructions are meant to help YOU live a healthy life style with a healthy organ to prevent other problems.

## Short-Term Goals

- Calorie and protein requirements immediately after transplant are increased due to the stress of the surgery and wound-healing needs. Adequate oral intake is important to provide the building blocks for healing and to help prevent infection and muscle loss.
- During the first few weeks of recovery, be sure to include nutritious foods at meal and snack times.
- If you have trouble with your weight (too high or too low) or have a poor appetite, contact the transplant team.
- Drink 1 to 2 liters of fluid (8 to 10 full 8-ounce glasses of fluid) per day, minimum, preferably water. Some people may be instructed to drink more fluids and some people may be instructed to drink less fluid based on their medical situation.

## Long-Term Goals

### Keep a desirable weight

- Weight gain after a transplant can be a problem due to improved appetite and fewer diet restrictions.
- Weight gain can occur from side effects of anti-rejection medicines.
- Weight gain after transplant increases your risk for high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, joint or bone disease and may shorten your life or the life of your new organ.
- Call your transplant office or your local doctor if you have questions about your weight.
- Your local doctor or your transplant team will be watching your cholesterol and triglyceride levels annually. If you have any concerns regarding your cholesterol or triglyceride levels, please contact your local doctor or our transplant team.

For information on heart-healthy eating or for recipe ideas, you can visit these web sites:

- [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)  
American Heart Association
- [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)  
American Diabetes Association
- [www.jdrf.org](http://www.jdrf.org)  
Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation

## Nutrition/Dehydration, continued

### Bone Health

Anti-rejection medicines can have negative side effects on bone strength. Also, any poor bone health that was there before transplant may make bone disease after transplant even more likely. Eat calcium-rich foods (low-fat dairy and cheese). Calcium supplements may be ordered by the transplant team following your transplant. Weight bearing exercise keeps your bones strong. Avoid smoking.

### Blood Sugar

You may get diabetes as a result of taking the anti-rejection medicines prednisone and tacrolimus. If your blood sugars are not well controlled with diet and/or medicines, you may be asked to follow a diabetic diet.

While you are in the hospital, diabetes educators and nutrition specialists will talk to you if you develop diabetes.

### Dehydration

Symptoms of rejection and infection are covered in previous sections of this manual. Symptoms of dehydration are also important for you to know because dehydration is often a cause for an increase in BUN and creatinine levels which are measurements of your kidney function.

### Signs Of Dehydration

- Low blood pressure, especially when standing up
- Dizziness when standing up
- Rapid pulse rate
- Weight loss
- Cramping in arms, hands, legs and feet
- Weak, loss of strength, confusion
- Dry mouth
- Low urine output
- Constipation or stomach pain

Drink 1 to 2 liters of fluids (8 to 10 full glasses) per day minimum, preferably water. Some people may be instructed to drink 2 to 3 liters of fluids per day.