



Dictionary of Organ Donation and Transplantation Terms

Acute Rejection: The body's attempt to destroy the transplanted organ. Acute rejection usually occurs in the first year after transplant.

Adverse Reaction: An unintended side effect of a drug or procedure.

Allocation: The process of determining how organs are distributed, based on policies and guidelines to make sure organs are distributed fairly.

Allograft: An organ or tissue that is transplanted from one human to another human.

Antibody: A protein substance made by the body's immune system to attack a foreign substance, sometimes, unfortunately, they attack transplanted organs. Transplant center will measure what antibodies you have against human tissue with a PRA test. The higher

your PRA, the harder it is to find organs that your body will not reject right away.

Antigen: A foreign substance that triggers the body to try to destroy it.

Anti-rejection drugs (immunosuppressive drugs): Drugs that reduce the body's ability to reject the transplanted organ.

Arteriogram: An x-ray of an artery after a dye has been injected.

Ascites: A buildup of fluid in the abdomen usually associated with liver disease.

Biopsy: The removal of a tiny piece of tissue from the body for examination under a microscope. This is done to diagnose rejection of a transplanted organ.

Blood vessels: The veins, arteries, and capillaries through which blood flows.

Brain death: The irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem. Brain death is not the same as a coma or persistent vegetative state.

Cadaveric Donor: an individual who has recently died of causes that do not affect the function of an organ to be transplanted

Cardiac death: The irreversible stopping of all heart, blood circulation, and breathing functions.

Chronic: A condition that develops slowly and lasts for a long time, or entire lifetime.

Chronic rejection: Slow failure of the transplanted organ.

Cirrhosis: A disease of the liver in which normal, healthy tissue is replaced with nonfunctioning tissue, and healthy, functioning liver cells are lost.

Cold ischemia time: The time an organ is without blood circulation from the time of removal of the organ from the donor to the time the organ is transplanted into the recipient.

Compliance: (also referred to as adherence) Following instructions of the medical team, such as taking prescribed medications, following diet or fluid restrictions, etc.

Congenital: Refers to a condition present at birth

Corticosteroid: A hormone produced by the body but given as a synthetic (man made) medicine to suppress your body's normal reaction to infection and foreign tissue.

Prednisone is a common corticosteroid.

Cross matching: A blood test performed before the transplant to see if the potential recipient will react poorly to the donor organ. You will have blood samples drawn every month while you are on the wait list. The test between donor tissues and your stored blood sample is called a crossmatch. The crossmatch must be negative for the kidney to be offered to you.

Cyclosporine: A drug used to prevent rejection of the transplanted organ by suppressing the body's defense system.

Deceased donor: A person who has been declared dead and whose organ or organs and/or tissues used for transplantation.

Delayed function: A condition in which the transplanted organ does not work well right after the transplant.

Dialysis: The use of a machine to correct the balance of fluids and chemicals in your body and to remove wastes from your body when your kidneys are failing.

Diastolic blood pressure: The bottom number in your blood pressure which indicates the pressure in the arteries when the heart is at rest.

Directed Living Donation - In a directed donation, the donor specifically names the person to which they are donating who will receive the transplant. This is the most common type of living donation. In a directed donation, the donor may be:

- a biological relative, such as a parent, brother, sister, or adult child
- a biologically unrelated person who has a personal or social connection with the transplant candidate, such as a spouse or significant other, a friend or a coworker
- a biologically unrelated person who has heard about the transplant candidate's need

Disability: A considerable limitation in major life activity that cannot be helped with the use of a corrective device or medication.

Donor: Someone from whom an organ or tissue is removed for transplantation.

Donor card: A document that indicates your wish to be an organ donor.

Donor pool: A group of people eligible to donate an organ.

Edema: Swelling caused when the body retains too much fluid, also called 'water weight.

End-stage organ disease: A disease that leads to permanent failure of an organ.

End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Program: Part of the Medicare program that provides medical coverage to people with end stage kidney disease or renal failure to help pay for dialysis or transplantation.

Experimental: New treatments, procedures, or drugs that are being tested.

Foreign body: A thing that enters the body that is not supposed to be there, such as a germ, or a transplanted organ.

Fulminant: Happening very quickly and with intensity.

Fungal disease: An infection that often occurs in patients during treatment with steroids or immunosuppressant's.

Genetic: Relating to heredity, birth, or origin.

Gingival hypertrophy: Enlargement of the gums.

Glomerular filtration rate: A measurement of kidney function used to determine the severity of kidney disease.

Graft: A transplanted organ or tissue.

Graft survival: when a transplanted tissue or organ is accepted by the body and functions properly

Hemodialysis: A treatment for kidney failure whereby the patient's blood is passed through a machine to remove excess fluid and wastes.

Hemorrhage: A rapid loss of a large amount of blood; excessive bleeding.

Hepatic: Relating to the liver.

Hepatitis: An inflammation of the liver that can lead to liver failure.

High blood pressure: High blood pressure occurs when the force of the blood pushing

Against the walls of the blood vessels is higher than normal because the blood vessels have either become less able to stretch or have gotten smaller.

Histocompatibility: the examination of human leukocyte antigens (HLA) in a patient often referred to as "tissue typing." Tissue typing is routinely performed for all donors and recipients to help match the donor with the most suitable recipients. This helps to decrease the likelihood of "rejecting" the transplanted organ. HLA (human leukocyte antigens) system: genetically determined series of antigens that are present on human white blood cells and tissues.

Hirsutism: An excessive increase of hair growth. It is a common side effect of some drugs and can be controlled with waxing, hair removal products or shaving.

Human leukocyte antigens (HLA): Molecules found on the surface of white blood cells in the body that characterize each person as unique. These cell-surface proteins are responsible for the regulation of the immune system in humans.

Immune response: The body's natural defense against foreign objects or organisms, such as bacteria, viruses, or transplanted organs or tissues.

Immune system: The organs, tissues, cells and cell products in the body that work to find and destroy foreign substances, such as viruses.

Immunosuppression: The artificial suppression of the immune response, usually through drugs, so that the body will not reject a transplanted organ or tissue.

Immunosuppressive: Relating to the weakening or reducing of the immune system's responses to foreign material.

Incompatible: no likeness or similarity between donor or recipient blood type or organs

Infection: A condition that occurs when foreign substance enters the body, causing the immune system to fight the intruder.

Inflammation: The swelling, heat and redness the body produces when it has an injury or infection.

Informed consent: The process of reaching an agreement based on a full disclosure and full understanding of what will take place.

Inpatient treatment: Treatment in the hospital involving at least one overnight stay.

Intensive care unit: A unit in the hospital that has specialized monitoring devices and equipment for the care of seriously ill patients.

Intravenous: Within a vein or veins, usually refers to medication or fluids.

Investigational: A drug or procedure that is in a research phase and has not yet been approved for patient use by the FDA.

Kidney Paired Donation (KPD) or Paired Exchange: an approach to living donor kidney transplantation where patients with incompatible donors swap kidneys to receive a compatible kidney. KPD is used in situations where a potential donor is incompatible. Because better donor HLA and age matching are correlated with lower lifetime mortality and longer lasting kidney transplants, many compatible pairs are also participating in swaps to find better matched kidneys.

Kidneys: A pair of organs that maintain fluid balance and remove wastes from your body through the production of urine.

Leukocyte: A white blood cell.

Liver: Organ responsible for the conversion of nutrients into usable substances.

Living donation: When a living person gives an organ or a portion of an organ for use in a transplant. A kidney, or portion of a liver, lung, pancreas or intestine may be donated. Most common organs donated by a living donor are kidney and liver.

Living donor: A person who donates a kidney or a part of their liver to someone else.

Living Donor (LD): A living person who donates an organ for transplantation, such as a kidney or a segment of the lung, liver, pancreas, or intestine. Living donors may be blood relatives, emotionally related individuals, or strangers.

Living Donor Chain: More than one pair of incompatible living donors and recipients may be linked with a non-directed living donor to form a donation chain in order to receive compatible organs.

Living Donor Follow-up Form (LDF): The form submitted by the transplant center at six-months and one year post-donation, containing a living donor's status, clinical measures and complications.

Living Donor Registration Form (LDR): The form submitted by the transplant center containing living donor demographics, pre-donation clinical measures, surgical information, post-operative information and complications and post-operative clinical measures.

Living-Related Donor (LRD): A family member who donates a kidney, part of a lung, liver or pancreas to another family member. Examples: a brother and a sister, or a parent and a child.

Living-Unrelated Donor: A person who is not related by blood, who donates a kidney, part of a lung, liver or pancreas to another person (such as a husband, wife, friend or in-law. In the last few years, stranger-to-stranger living unrelated donations have greatly increased).

Mail-order pharmacy: A pharmacy that provides medicines and medical supplies via the mail, often at reduced costs and affiliated with the transplant hospital.

Match: the compatibility between recipient and donor

Model for End-Stage Liver Disease (MELD): The scoring system used to measure illness severity in liver transplant candidates. This system is used in the allocation of livers to adults, established in February 2002. The MELD system uses three laboratory values (bilirubin, creatinine and INR) to calculate a score that is predictive of the risk of death within three months on the liver waiting list. Livers are allocated to waitlisted patients with chronic liver disease based upon this score. See Pediatric End Stage Liver Disease (PELD) Scoring System.

Mortality: Death.

Multiple listing: Being on the organ transplant waiting list at more than one transplant facility.

Since candidates at centers local to the donor hospital are usually considered ahead of those who are more distant, multiple listing may increase your chances of receiving a local organ offer. Some studies suggest multiple listing can shorten the average waiting times of Kidney transplant candidates by several months. This does not guarantee that every multiple-listed patient will have a shorter waiting time. Some transplant programs may not accept multiple-listed patients. If you are considering multiple listing, you should ask the transplant team how they handle such requests.

National Organ Transplant Act: A 1984 act that outlawed the sale of human organs and tissues, and established a national database for organ sharing.

Nephrectomy: The removal of a kidney.

Nephrologist: A specialist in the treatment of kidney insufficiency and kidney disease.

Non-Directed Living Donation/ Altruistic Donation: In a non-directed donation, the living donor is not related to or known by the recipient, but makes his/her donation purely out of selfless motives. The match is arranged based on medical compatibility with a patient in need. Some non-directed donors choose never to meet their recipient. In other cases, the donor and recipient may meet at some time, if they both agree, and if the transplant center policy permits it. Non-directed is a preferred term to use vs. altruistic.

Noncompliance: failure to follow the instructions of one's health care providers, such as not taking medicine as prescribed or not showing up for clinic visits

Nonfunction: A condition in which a transplanted organ fails to start working after being transplanted.

OPO: Organ Procurement Organization

OPO service area: The organ procurement organization that is responsible for coordinating organ donation and educating the public about donation in a specific geographical area.

OPTN: Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (see below)

Organ: A part of the body, made up of various types of tissues that performs a particular function.

Organ donation: To give an organ to someone in need of that organ, or to have your organs removed for transplantation after your death.

Organ preservation: Donated organs require special methods of preservation to keep them viable between removal and transplantation.

Organ procurement or organ recovery: The act of surgically removing an organ from a donor for transplantation.

Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network: The organization that administers the nation's organ sharing system (a national database that matches donated organs to recipients) and ensures that organs are allocated in a fair and just manner.

Organ procurement organization: Organizations that serve as a link between the donor and the recipient and are responsible for the identification of donors and the removal, preservation and transplantation of organs for transplantation.

Outpatient care (ambulatory care): Medical testing or treatment done without an overnight hospital stay, performed in a hospital or a physician's office.

Paired Donation: Also called paired kidney exchange, paired donation or paired exchange involves at least two pairs of living kidney donors and transplant candidates who do not have matching blood types. The candidates "trade" donors so that each candidate receives a kidney from a donor with a compatible blood type.

Pancreas: The organ that secretes digestive enzymes as well as insulin for blood sugar metabolism.

Panel Reactive Antibody (PRA): a way of measuring immune system activity within the body. PRA is higher when more antibodies are being made.

PCP: Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, a type of pneumonia seen primarily in patients whose immune systems are suppressed

Pool: A group of people with a similar characteristic or function.

Potential transplant recipient: A transplant candidate who has been ranked by the OPTN computer match program as the person to whom an organ from a specific deceased organ donor is offered.

Procurement: The surgical procedure of removing donated organs or tissue.

Pulmonary: Related to the lungs.

Recipient: A person who receives an organ or tissue transplant.

Recovery or retrieval: The procedure of removing cells, tissues or organs from a donor for the purpose of transplantation.

Rejection: an attempt by the immune system to reject or destroy what it recognizes to be a "foreign" presence

Renal: Related to the kidneys.

Re-transplantation: Because of rejection or failure of a transplanted organ, some patients receive another transplant after being put back on the waiting list.

Second opinion: A medical opinion provided by a second physician after one physician has provided a diagnosis to an individual.

Sensitized: Having antibodies in the blood, which means a potential recipient will react against a greater number of potential organ offers.

Side effect: An unintended reaction to a drug.

Status: A waiting list code that is used to indicate the degree of medical urgency for patients awaiting transplants, such as Status A or Status 7.

Steroids: Natural substances found in the body to help control important functions. Man-made (or synthetic) catabolic steroids are used to suppress your immune system.

Survival rates: The number that indicates what percentage of patients are still living or organs functioning after a certain amount of time.

Systolic blood pressure: The top number of the blood pressure measurement. It measures the maximum pressure exerted when the heart contracts.

T Cells: a white blood cell responsible for the body's immunity

Thoracic: Related to the heart, lungs, or chest.

Tissue: A general term for transplantable parts of the body other than organs; includes bones, tendons, ligaments, corneas, heart valves, skin, veins, and some nerves.

Tissue typing: Done in a laboratory, a procedure to determine the genetic makeup of an organ donor.

Transplant, transplantation: Transfer of an organ or tissue from one person's body into another person's body to replace a diseased or failed organ or tissue.

Transplant candidate: An individual who has been identified as medically suited to benefit from an organ transplant and has been placed on the waiting list by the transplant program.

Transplant physician: A physician who provides nonsurgical care and treatment to transplant patients before and after transplant.

Transplant program: A department within a transplant hospital that provides transplantation of a particular type of organ.

Transplant recipient: A person who has received an organ transplant.

Transplant surgeon: A physician who performs transplants and provides surgical care to transplant recipients.

United Network of Organ Sharing: The non-profit organization that administrates and maintains the country's organ transplant waiting list through the government.

Varices (esophageal): The swollen veins at the bottom of the esophagus, a common condition caused by increased pressure in the liver that can ulcerate and bleed.

Vascular: Referring to blood circulation and blood vessels.

Ventilator: A machine that forces air into the patient's respiratory system when the patient is not able to breathe properly.

Virus: A collection of tiny infectious organisms that grow and reproduce themselves while living in cells in the body.

Waiting list: after evaluation by the transplant physician, a patient is added to the national waiting list by the transplant center. Lists are specific to both geographic area and organ type. Each time a donor organ becomes available, the UNOS computer generates a list of potential recipients based on factors that include genetic similarity, organ size, medical urgency and time on the waiting list. Through this process, a "new" list is generated each time an organ becomes available.

Waiting time: The amount of time a candidate is on the wait list. Waiting times can depend on many factors, including: blood type (some are rarer than others); tissue type; height and weight of transplant candidate; size of donated organ; medical urgency

- time on the waiting list
- the distance between the donor's hospital and the potential donor organ
- how many donors there are in the local area over a period of time and
- the transplant center's criteria for accepting organ offers

This list is not intended to be a complete list of terms associated with the organ donation process and transplantation. If you are not sure what someone is talking about, please ask them to explain it to you. It is your right to know about your health care.

Terms and definitions: *Medical Terminology: A Word-Building Approach 6th Edition*
by Jane Rice.

*World Health Organization: Global Glossary of Terms and
Definitions on
Donation and Transplantation; Organ
Procurement and Transplantation Network*