



## Healthy Guidelines for Transplant Recipients After Transplant

### Weight

During the initial evaluation to be put on the transplant list, doctors will check to see if your weight is in a healthy range. If you are very overweight or underweight, it could affect your ability to be listed.

After transplant, it is very important to keep your weight in a healthy range. If you are underweight, try to regain muscle. Your transplant facility will have dietitians or other health care providers that can provide information on safe ways to regain your strength.

It is also important to understand that your new organ needs care throughout your life by utilizing self-care, exercising regularly, and eating healthy foods. If you suddenly gain or lose weight, contact your health provider. There are many reasons why this might happen, and typically your health care provider can recommend a course of action to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

### Food

Eating 5 servings a day of fruits and vegetables every day is not only healthy for everyone, it is especially crucial for transplant recipients. Make sure you wash all produce thoroughly. Eat only lean meats, fish and chicken. It is a good idea to limit complex carbohydrates in your diet. Make sure to connect with a nutritionist for more extensive nutrition recommendations.

### Salt

Following a no-added salt/low sodium diet to avoid excess fluid retention and to maintain a healthy blood pressure post-transplant is a key factor in keeping your new organ healthy. It is important to be consistent with your daily sodium intake.

2,000 to 3,000 mg of sodium a day is the recommended amount. In order to maintain these levels, try to limit:

- the use of a salt shaker at mealtime
- salty snacks, fast food meals

- packaged foods such as boxed mixes, seasoning packets, soups, canned vegetables, microwave foods
- cheeses
- processed meats
- pickled foods
- condiments

## **Fat**

To reduce the risks linked to being overweight and developing heart disease:

- Choose heart-healthy fats, such as olive oil, nuts, avocados, and canola oil.
- Avoid foods high in unhealthy fats, such as hot dogs, high-fat dairy, and fried and fast foods.
- Select lean cuts of meat and prepare them in a low-fat way.
- Limit added fats at mealtime, such as butter, margarine, mayonnaise, and salad dressing
- Check food labels for hydrogenated oil and trans fats, such as commercially baked goods, snack crackers, and fried foods.

## **Sugar**

To help maintain a healthy weight and prevent or control diabetes and/or high triglycerides:

- Limit foods high in sugar, like baked goods, ice cream, syrups, and candies.
- Limit the amount of sugar, honey and syrup added to your food.
- Avoid soda, sweetened waters, fruit drinks, and sweetened teas.
- Check labels for and avoid “high fructose syrup.”
- When you must use added sugar, use a healthy sugar substitute such as stevia, coconut sugar or agave.

## **Fluids**

Before the transplant, many patients are on fluid restriction. After the transplant, it becomes necessary to drink enough fluids to maintain hydration. It can be difficult for post-transplant patients to begin drinking more water as they have become accustomed to restricting fluid intake and being dehydrated. Remember that now you can and should drink water in larger quantities but make sure to specify recommended levels with your doctor. Caffeine and sugary drinks should be consumed in moderation. Caffeine can increase blood pressure, and too much sugar can cause weight gain. Speak with your health care provider about drinking caffeinated beverages or alcohol.

## **Calcium**

After a transplant, your body needs more calcium. Ways to ensure you get enough calcium include:

- Drinking skim or low-fat milk.
- Eating yogurt and other low-fat dairy products.
- Taking a daily calcium supplement only if your health provider advises you to. NEVER start taking any medication or supplements without first consulting with your transplant health provider.
- Follow an exercise program to improve your bone density including weight-bearing exercise.

## **Food and Drug Interaction**

If you are taking Prograf, Sirolimus, or any cyclosporine-type medication, you cannot consume grapefruit, pomegranate and Seville oranges. You also cannot drink any fruit juices that contain any of these fruits. Grapefruit drinks, such as Fresca, Squirt, and Sundrop also need to be avoided. Avoid taking any holistic supplements before first checking with your doctor. Many of these foods and supplements can alter how your medications work and can cause severe complications.

## **Foods to Avoid (General list)**

Depending on what type of transplant you have, the list of foods to avoid will be different. This is because each organ has its own risks, medications, and specific characteristics.

However, there is a general list that ALL transplant patients should follow.

### **DO NOT EAT:**

- Foods that should be cooked but are raw or uncooked, such as uncooked cookie dough
- Raw or undercooked meat
- Raw fish or shellfish, including sushi and raw oysters
- Raw sprouts
- Unpasteurized juice and cider
- Immune boosting supplements

## **Food Safety**

Always wash your hands before preparing or eating food. Any surfaces used for cutting such as the counter top need to be clean and sanitized. Wash fruits and vegetables, regardless of whether they have been washed before. Rinse everything under running water.

Be mindful of bacteria from cross contamination. Keep raw meat, eggs, and chicken separate.

Pre-packaged food items are generally ok to eat. Mixed meat items like hotdogs, salami and bologna need to be steamed before eating.

Leftovers need to be thrown out after one or two days. Always check carefully for expiration dates when you buy food.

For more information:

<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/UCM312793.pdf>

## **Exercise**

The health of your organ relies not only on eating and drinking the right things, but also on being active. Before starting any type of exercise program, make sure you talk to your doctor. Transplant patients are all different, there isn't a magic number as to when you should start exercising after the transplant. There are many things to consider before you begin to exercise. By creating an exercise routine, you will see the following benefits:

- Improved overall health
- Improved self-esteem, lower stress and a greater sense of general well-being
- Healthy weight
- Better bone density
- Increased muscle strength
- Improved blood pressure and improved levels of cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood sugar

\*NOTE: These recommendations may vary depending on your specific health condition. For more information on healthy guidelines after a transplant, contact your transplant coordinator or medical personnel through your transplant center.