

Glossary of Transplant Terms

Antibody – A protein made by the body to fight foreign matter, such as germs.

Antigen – A type of foreign matter in the body, such as a transplant, that triggers a reaction by the immune system. This action leads to the production of antibodies, which in turn try to destroy the transplant organ.

Biopsy – A piece of tissue removed from the body and tested for changes, rejection or disease.

Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN) – A lab test that measures the level of urea in the blood. Urea is formed when protein breaks down in the body. It is carried by blood to the kidneys and removed through the urine. Poor kidney function causes BUN to rise.

Creatinine – Found in the blood, it is a waste by-product of muscle; creatinine level in the blood is one of the key measures of kidney. When the kidneys do not work well, creatinine levels will be high.

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) - Failure of the heart to pump blood well

Deceased donor – An individual from whom at least one solid organ is recovered or the purpose of transplantation after suffering brain death or cardiac death

Dialysis - A mechanical process designed to partially perform kidney functions, including correcting the balance of fluids and chemicals in the body and removing wastes. See Hemodialysis and Peritoneal Dialysis.

Edema – Excess fluid in the body

ESRD - End Stage Renal Disease or kidney failure

Hemodialysis - A type of dialysis that uses a special filter to cleanse the blood. Hemodialysis replaces the work of your own kidneys to clear wastes and extra fluid from your blood. Hemodialysis can be done at home where you may be able to fit treatments more easily into your daily schedule or in a Dialysis Clinic.

Hepatic – relating to the liver

Hypertension – high blood pressure

Immunosuppressive medications/ Anti-rejection medications – medicines that are given to prevent rejection of a transplanted organ

LifeLink Organ Procurement Organization– a nonprofit organization that recovers organs and tissue for transplants. The OPO serves as a link between the donor and the recipient. They retrieve and transport the organ for transplant.

LIVING DONOR– 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 altruistic strangers.

Match – the compatibility between the person who receives an organ and the donor. In general, the better the match, the greater the chance for success with a transplant.

Medicare –The program of the Federal government that provides hospital and medical insurance, through social security taxes, to people age 65 and over, those who have permanent kidney failure and certain people with disabilities.

Medicaid – The program of the State of Georgia and the Federal government that shares the cost of providing hospital and medical insurance to low income people who are aged, blind, disabled or have permanent kidney failure and are not covered by Medicare. Programs vary greatly from state to state

Noncompliance – failure to follow the instructions of one’s healthcare providers, such as not taking medicine as prescribed or not showing up for clinic visits.

Paired donor exchange kidney transplant –A person can donate to a friend or loved one despite incompatible blood matches. A donor and recipient are matched with another incompatible donor and recipient pair, and the kidneys are exchanged between the pairs.

Peritoneal Dialysis –A treatment technique for kidney failure that uses the patient's own body tissues inside of the abdominal cavity to act as a filter. A plastic tube called a "dialysis catheter" is placed through the abdominal wall into the abdominal cavity. A special fluid is then flushed into the abdominal cavity that acts as a filter between this fluid and the blood stream. By using different types of solutions, waste products and excess water can be removed from the body through this process.

Pulmonary – having to do with the lungs

Rejection – an immune response against grafted tissue such as a transplanted organ. If it is not successfully treated, the transplant can fail.

Renal – refers to the kidney

Status - The degree of medical urgency for patients waiting for transplant, usually heart and liver.

Transplant Center - A hospital that performs transplants, including qualifying patients for transplant, registering patients on the national waiting list, performing transplant surgery and providing care before and after transplant.

United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) – The private, nonprofit membership organization that coordinates the nation's transplant system which includes managing the national organ transplant waiting list.

Waiting list – After evaluation, patients are added to the national waiting list by the transplant center. Lists are based on area of the country and organ type. Each time a donor organ becomes available the UNOS computer makes a list of potential recipients based on factors such as tissue typing, organ size and medical urgency. Through this process, a new list is made each time an organ becomes available.