

Fall 2026 Newsletter



What to Expect During the Transplant Evaluation Process

Referral: The evaluation process for a kidney or pancreas transplant begins with a referral to the Presbyterian Transplant Center. A referral may be submitted by your primary care clinician, nephrologist (kidney specialist), or dialysis unit. You may also refer yourself.

Referrals can be submitted through the electronic medical record by a clinician, by calling our clinic at (505) 841-1434, fax at (505) 563-6137 or by email at transplantreferral@phs.org.

Intake information: After we receive your referral, a member of the transplant care team will call you for an approximately 30-minute conversation. We will review your contact information, insurance coverage, and medical history, including the cause of your kidney disease and other medical conditions.

Please make sure your referral includes an accurate phone number. If we are unable to reach you after three attempts, we will mail a letter to you and the referring clinician. Your referral will then be closed, but a new referral can be submitted whenever you are ready to restart the process.

Accepted insurance plans: Presbyterian Transplant Services has contracts with many insurance plans.

Background Forms: After the initial intake, we will mail a transplant information packet and two additional forms to fill out and return: the Recipient Intake Form for New Patients and the Background Information Form for New Patients. Each form is three to four pages long and is also available to download from our website. Some questions may be similar to those asked during your phone intake, but the forms provide documentation needed for the next steps and information for the social worker's evaluation. After we receive your completed forms and any outside medical records we need, we will create your chart. A pre-transplant coordinator will review it before you move into the evaluation phase.

Orientation: This class will give you, your family and any potential donors an overview of the transplant process. We understand that the process may be new to you and involve a lot of information. Our team is here to guide you through each step.

Evaluation: The evaluation phase includes appointments with members of the transplant care team and several medical tests. An Evaluation Test List is available on our website at phs.org/transplant and is included in your information packet. Testing may include lab work, imaging, cardiac testing and dental clearance. You will be assigned a pre-transplant coordinator who will serve as your primary contact throughout the evaluation process. You will also meet with a transplant nephrologist (kidney specialist), transplant surgeon and social worker. We often schedule these appointments on the same day to reduce the number of trips to our clinic. If needed, appointments can be scheduled on different days.

Transplant Selection Committee: Your evaluation is complete after you have met with all required team members of the transplant care team and have completed the required testing. The amount of time this takes varies based on your individual medical needs. Once your evaluation is complete, the transplant team will review your information and determine whether you are a candidate for transplant. We will communicate the decision to you by phone and letter.

How Do I Get on the Kidney Transplant List?

Your kidney doctor or dialysis center can refer you to a transplant center for evaluation. To be considered for transplant, you will need to complete a transplant workup. This includes meeting with a transplant nephrologist (kidney specialist), transplant surgeon, transplant social worker and transplant coordinator. You will also need testing such as lab work, imaging and clearances from specialists, which may include cardiology, gastroenterology and dental care, depending on your medical needs.

Once your evaluation is complete, your case is reviewed by a multidisciplinary transplant selection committee. The team considers whether you are healthy enough for major surgery, whether other medical conditions could be made worse by transplant, whether you are likely to benefit from transplant and whether you are able to care for a transplanted kidney after surgery. If the committee determines

that you are a transplant candidate and all requirements are complete, you may be made active on the transplant list.

What Does It Mean to Be Active on the Transplant List?

When you are active on the transplant list, you are included on the national waiting list for a kidney transplant. If a deceased-donor kidney that may be a good match becomes available, the transplant team will review the offer with you and determine whether to move forward.

Your position on the list is based on several factors. Some of the main factors include:

1. **Blood type:** Separate waiting lists are maintained for blood types A, B, AB and O.
2. **Wait time:** Wait time begins when you start dialysis or when you are listed at a transplant center. In general, a longer wait time can move you higher on the list.

3. **Sensitization:** If you have antibodies against other people's proteins, your compatible kidney options may be more limited. If a compatible kidney becomes available, sensitization may affect your priority on the list. Sensitization is more common in people who have had blood transfusions, pregnancies or previous transplants.

Priority is not based on the cause of your kidney disease, your age in most cases or the transplant center where you are listed.

What Does It Mean to Be Inactive on the Transplant List?

Being inactive means there is a temporary barrier preventing you from receiving a transplant offer, but you may otherwise remain a transplant candidate. You will not receive kidney offers while you are inactive, but you will continue to accrue wait time.

Reasons for inactive status may include not yet needing a transplant, such as not yet being on dialysis, but being listed to begin accruing wait time; working toward a weight-loss goal; outdated lab work or imaging; or an expired medical clearance, such as cardiology, gastroenterology or dental clearance.

How Do I Know Whether I Am Active or Inactive?

Contact your transplant coordinator. Your coordinator can tell you where you are in the process, explain any barriers to active status and help you understand what is needed to address them.



Insurance Coverage for Transplant Care

Presbyterian Transplant Services accepts most major commercial insurance plans, including Presbyterian Health Plan, United Healthcare and Blue Cross Blue Shield NM, as well as Tricare, many Medicare Advantage plans and most New Mexico Medicaid/Turquoise managed care plans.

Insurance and benefit coverage for specialty care, such as transplant care, can be complex. Contact your health insurance plan's customer service department to verify coverage. The phone number should be on the back of your insurance card. You can also call the

Presbyterian Transplant office at (505) 841-1434. A member of the transplant care team may be able to help clarify coverage for care at Presbyterian.

If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan (part C), open enrollment is Oct. 15 – Dec. 7, 2026.

Before making changes to your coverage, check with any plan you are considering to confirm Presbyterian Transplant program and Presbyterian Hospital are in network. You can also call the Presbyterian transplant office and speak with a transplant social worker.



Tools to Help Find a Living Kidney Donor

A microsite is a free, personalized website designed to help patients who need a kidney transplant connect with possible living donors. You can add photos and share your story, including what led to your need for a transplant, what life is like now, how receiving a kidney from a living donor could change your life and details about your family, interests and hobbies.

You will receive a unique URL that you can share by email and on social media.

To help spread the word, you will also receive:

- 250 business cards to hand out
- 10 posters to display in your community
- The option to request 25 free custom posters that include your photo

For more information or to set up a microsite, contact Melissa Roberts, MSN, RN, CCTC, living donor coordinator, at (505) 563-6472 or mrains3@phs.org.

UPCOMING EVENT:

The 2026 New Mexico Kidney Foundation Annual Pickleball Fundraiser will be held Oct. 24-25 at The Canyon Club Four Hills. For more information or to register, call (505) 369-6788 or email info@nmkidney.org.



Pancreas Transplant Care at Presbyterian

Patients receiving kidney or pancreas care at Presbyterian can expect specialized compassionate care before and after transplant from an experienced care team that includes:

- Transplant surgeons
- Nephrologists (kidney specialists who focus on transplant patients)
- Nurses
- Transplant coordinators
- Transplant social workers

In addition to our transplant outcomes, Presbyterian offers pancreas-after-kidney (PAK) and simultaneous pancreas-and-kidney (SPK) transplants for appropriate patients.

The donor pancreas comes from a deceased donor and is transplanted into the recipient. These procedures may be considered for patients with Type 1 diabetes that is difficult to control, including those who may not recognize dangerously low

blood sugar levels, which can lead to severe hypoglycemia or coma.

Pancreas transplants often are performed with a kidney transplant. During the procedure, the patient's pancreas and kidneys usually remain in place. The donor pancreas is typically placed in the lower right area of the abdomen, and its blood vessels are connected to the patient's blood vessels. After a successful pancreas transplant, recipients may no longer need insulin injections.

Presbyterian performed New Mexico's first SPK transplant in

2017 and has since completed about a dozen of these procedures. SPK transplantation is an accepted treatment for many patients with end-stage kidney disease caused by insulin-dependent Type 1 diabetes and this treatment may allow recipients to live without ongoing insulin therapy. Presbyterian also performs pancreas transplant alone (PTA) procedures for appropriate patients whose blood glucose levels are not adequately controlled with insulin pumps and other therapies. Presbyterian remains New Mexico's only multi-organ transplant provider.



Scan this QR code to visit our website for more information about Presbyterian Transplant Services and living donation options. You also can call our office for more information at (505) 841-1434 or toll free at (800) 597-7217.