

December 2023

UI HEALTH CARE ORGAN TRANSPLANT CENTER

The holiday season is upon us! This can be a time of family, happiness, and joy—or it can be stressful and overwhelming. Here are some tips on getting through the holidays and limiting your stress.

- Try to keep to your regular routine as much as possible.
- Think moderation and be realistic.
- Don't be alone if you don't want to. Surround yourself with people who support you, love you, and accept you.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Focus on the day and be kind to yourself.

Transplant and your mental health

We all are aware that our physical health impacts our mental health (and vice versa). When you live with a chronic health condition, it is common to experience changes in your mood, activity, and day-to-day emotions. Transplant candidates and recipients are at an increased risk for mental health concerns, both pre-transplant and post-transplant. This can be due to a variety of factors including a preexisting mental health condition, a new diagnosis, and medication side effects.

The most common issues experienced are mood and anxiety-related disorders. Common symptoms include mood swings, lack of motivation, avoidance of medical appointments/testing, noncompliance, poor sleep, and even thoughts of self-harm. It is vital that you are attentive to your mental health and ask for help when needed. The earlier you can address the issues that arise, the better it will be for you.

If you need assistance in locating a mental health provider or are in crisis, please reach out to someone such as your transplant social worker, dialysis social worker, primary care provider, insurance company, and/or family/friends. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is another resource—either call 988 or go [online](#).

Winter weather is upon us

Winter weather is upon us, leading to increased usage of heat in our homes. This can lead to increased stress both mentally and on your finances. Assistance is available through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

LIHEAP provides cash grants to low-income households to help pay heating bills, with crisis grants available for those in immediate danger of being without heat. The grant is a one-time payment that is sent to the utility company and is credited towards your bill. The grant amount depends on household size, household income, and the type of fuel. Because this is a grant, it does not have to be repaid!

You can apply between November 1 to April 1 each year. These applications are first-come, first-served. Reach out to your dialysis social worker or one of the social workers here at UI Health Care Organ Transplant Center for information on where to apply.

Rose Bowl Parade

Every New Year's Day, there is a Donate Life Rose Bowl parade float that is a memorial to organ, eye, and tissue donors. The first float was in 2004. Donors are represented or memorialized on the float in florographs. Iowa Donor Network honors a deceased donor on the float with a florograph each year, as do other OPOs for their respective states. Recipients are also honored—sometimes riding on the float. The float's riders, walkers, and honorees represent millions of people who have been impacted by donation. The 135 Rose Parade will occur at 10 a.m. CST on January 1, 2024.

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Changing Lives.®

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This section of our monthly newsletter will focus on support and resources offered both by the Organ Transplant Center and throughout the nation. Please utilize these as you need them and reach out with any questions!

Kidney Line: 319-356-1136

Liver Line: 319-356-1137

Medicare Post-Transplant

Medicare coverage applies to those that receive a transplant at a Medicare approved facility. This is important for any potential present and future immunosuppressant coverage. Medicare Part B will cover immunosuppressants at 80% after the deductible is met, with 20% being the patient's responsibility or covered by a secondary payor. Medicare Advantage plans apply the same rules.

* For further questions or coverage changes, please contact the Organ Transplant Center financial counselors.

Video Resources

The Organ Transplant Center has put together videos to better explain the transplant evaluation process and provide additional patient education. Please click the links below to access these videos.

- [Kidney Transplant - Patient Education Videos](#)
- [Liver Transplant - Patient Education Videos](#)
- [Pancreas Transplant - Patient Education Videos](#)

Organ Transplant Support Group

Starting in February 2024, the UI Organ Transplant Center will begin having our support group every other month. The support group will also be a hybrid version—both in-person and by Zoom. Each group will be focused on a specific topic, with speakers followed by time for discussion. If you have any questions, please contact 319-467-8385.

Location:

Iowa Donor Network
550 Madison Avenue
North Liberty, IA 52317

Date:

February 8, 2024
Speaker – UIHC Dietitian

Zoom Information:

Meeting ID: 974 1496 3127
Passcode: 118836

Additional Resources

Social Security Disability

- [Adult Disability Starter Kit](#)
- [SSI Child Disability Starter Kit](#)

National Living Donor Assistance Center (NLDAC):
[How to Apply](#)

Iowa Anatomical Gift Fund: [Application](#)