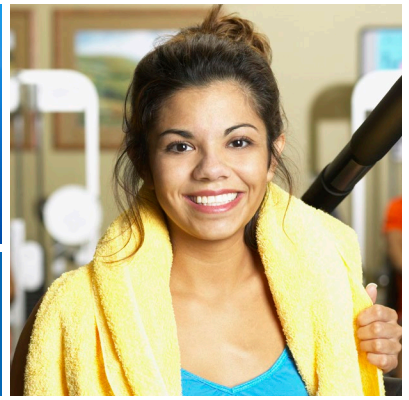


# Becoming active again after a transplant



**Congratulations! You've had your organ transplant. Your health will improve day by day. At this stage, you have an important role to play to recover well. Here's some important information for you and your family.**

## When will I resume my activities?

You'll need to resume them gradually. While you waited for your transplant, your muscles may have suffered from lack of exercise. The hospital stay and the rest required for recovery also weaken the muscles. So, they're probably less strong and may have lost some volume.

Already in the hospital, you're encouraged to **get up, sit longer in a chair, wash yourself, walk in your room, then in the corridor**, etc. At first, these activities take all your energy. Over time, your body will adapt by developing all your muscles. To regain strength, you need to move.

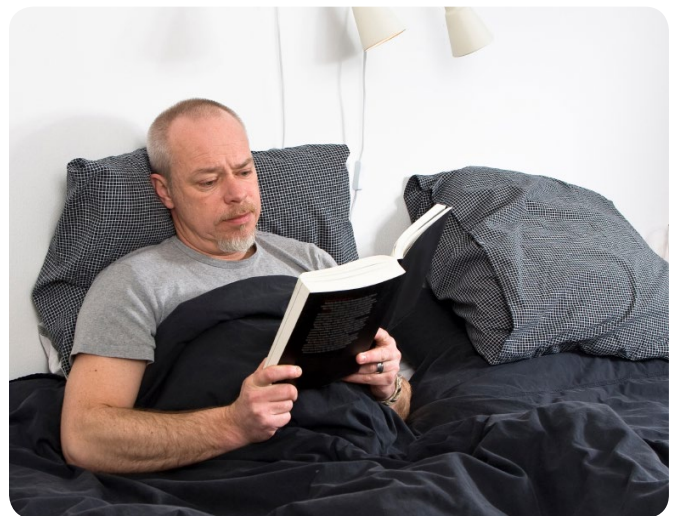


**When you feel tired after an effort, stop and rest. You'll get back to the activity later.**

## Is it normal to feel tired a lot?

During the first few days after returning home, it's normal to need to rest often.

For the first few weeks (and for as long as you feel the need), take a nap after meals and after any strenuous activity. These rest periods will help you regain your strength and recover more quickly. As time goes by, you'll feel less tired.



## How can I get back in shape physically?

To get back in shape, it's good to exercise every day. If a physiotherapist at the hospital designed a program for you, keep doing it when you return home.

Some physical activities you can do a few weeks after your transplant are:

- walking
- cycling (stationary or outdoor bicycle)



## What can I aim for?

In the beginning, do what you can. Start with 5 to 10 minutes of walking a day. When you've reached this goal, add 5 minutes more for one week. Then, aim for 20 minutes a day.

Gradually, you'll be able to do **30 minutes of exercise every day**. This will go a long way towards getting you back in shape. You'll be less tired and your self-confidence will return. To motivate yourself even more, join a walking group (see the Useful Resources section at the end of this sheet)!

In a few months, you'll be able to safely resume your usual activities. You'll need to discuss this with your healthcare team.

## Is there anything I can't do?

- **For the first 2 to 3 months, it's best not to lift anything heavier than 4.5 kg (10 pounds)** (grocery bags, child, large bag of potatoes, etc.). Wait until your muscles have recovered and the incision has healed. Afterwards, take it gradually. If you feel pain after any effort, wait a little longer.
- Contact sports (soccer, hockey, etc.) and any other activity with a high risk of injury are not recommended.



## When will I be able to drive again?

Driving isn't recommended during the first few weeks after a transplant. To drive, you need to be in very good physical condition. Recovery takes time and often there is still some physical pain. You might also be taking medications that make you a bit drowsy.

Before driving again, it's important to talk with a member of your healthcare team. The timing will depend on your condition and how quickly you're recovering. Your doctor will tell you when you can resume driving.



While you're waiting to be able to drive again, travel with another person.

## When can I resume sexual activity?

You'll be able to enjoy moments of sexual intimacy as soon as you feel up to it. These moments with your partner are important. Give yourself time to get back into them. For penetrative sex, it's best to wait 4 to 8 weeks after the transplant to give your core muscles time to heal properly.

If you have concerns about your sex life, your healthcare team can help you. Don't hesitate to talk with them. If needed, they can refer you to a sex therapist or psychologist.

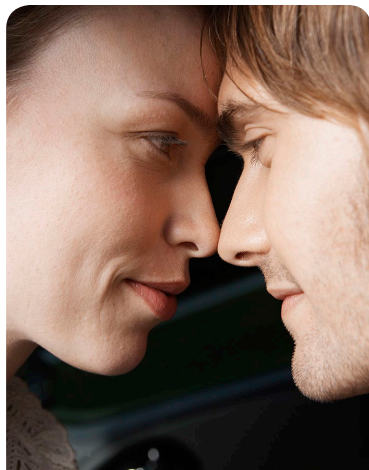
## Can sexual activity damage my new organ?

No, there's no danger!

## Will my sex life be different after a transplant?

At first, you may not have the same sexual pleasure you had before.

- > You may need to give yourself time to rekindle your sex drive (libido). The disease and the transplant may have made you very anxious. Some people ignore their sex drive and sometimes even avoid sexual relations with their partner. So, over the past few months, you may have had a very strong emotional relationship with your partner, but without sex. Adjusting to life with a transplanted organ also takes a lot of energy.



- > After the transplant, as you gradually regain your sex drive, it can happen that your partner's drive is reduced. Seeing you now out of danger may trigger a delayed reaction to emotions that your partner had suppressed. Talk it over and look for solutions together.
- > The first few times, many people either don't reach orgasm or have more difficulty reaching it. Some men experience erectile dysfunction. Most often the cause is psychological.
- > Some anti-rejection drugs (immunosuppressants), such as prednisone, can make erections difficult. In this case, your doctor may prescribe medication (such as Viagra), which can help restore your confidence.



## Are there any precautions to take regarding sexual activity after a transplant?

- Anti-rejection medications decrease your resistance to infection. You should therefore be especially careful to avoid sexually transmitted infections. If you don't have a stable partner, always use a condom or female condom.
- In both men and women, fertility returns soon after a transplant. Because of this, it is important for both men and women to **use contraception for 2 years after the transplant**. There are several reasons for this. Discuss this with your doctor, who can help you choose the best method of contraception for you.
- **If you want to have a child, it's important to discuss this with your healthcare team.** They will assess whether your medications need to be changed.



## When will I go back to work?

The timing of your return to work depends on your health and your job.

Usually, you can return between 3 and 12 months after the transplant, depending on what organ was transplanted. The return can be gradual. Discuss this with your healthcare team.

## Who can I talk to for help or to ask questions?

Don't hesitate to raise any questions with your healthcare team.



### USEFUL RESOURCES

Rando Québec :  
To find a walking club and discover places to hike (French only).  
> **514 252-3157**  
> **randoquebec.ca**

Kino-Québec :  
This site highlights the importance of walking. You'll find tips and advice to get started and be properly equipped (French only).  
> **kino-quebec.qc.ca**

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our web site  
**chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante**



## NOTEPAD



### Questions




### Resource people and contacts


*The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.*

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal  
**chumontreal.qc.ca**

