



YOUR FRIEND HAD AN INTESTINAL TRANSPLANT

A Guide for Those
Supporting Others



Transplant
UNWRAPPED

The purpose of this material is to inform friends of transplant patients about the unique circumstances of an intestinal transplant patient and help them to understand what their friend is going through to promote better understanding.

The material covered is not all-inclusive and is simplified for ease of reading. Further information about intestinal transplant can be found on our website and in reputable medical journals.

Introduction

It may be challenging to understand what your friend is going through. Your friend has a complicated medical situation with many moving parts. Your friend may have moved away from his or her home and may be living in a different city near the transplant center. It is likely that if your friend is listed on the organ waiting list, he or she may not make plans like before. This is normal and not a reflection of your friendship.

Your friend is living a different life now that he or she is waiting for, or has just undergone a transplant. Medical appointments and tests are more demanding and can change at a moment's notice. Your friend needs to focus on his or her health at the moment, resulting in a decreased frequency of social activities.

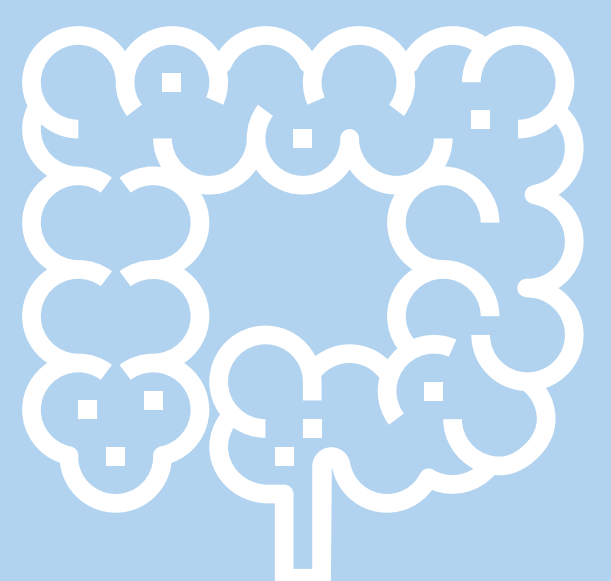
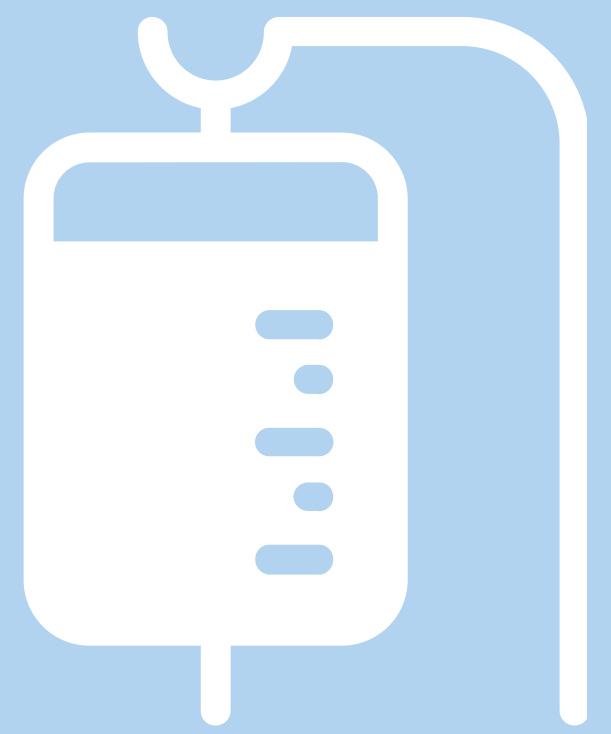
To support your friend, the best thing you can do is to become educated about what he or she is going through, so you can have a better understanding of the situation.

What is an Intestinal Transplant?

An intestinal transplant is an operation to replace diseased or shortened small intestine with a healthy intestine from a donor. It is a highly specialized and complicated operation that has only been performed since 1987.

When is an Intestinal Transplant Required?

- An intestinal transplant may be considered in patients with intestinal failure who have developed complications from parenteral nutrition, or PN.
- PN is when a person requires all their nutrition to be given through a line into a vein because the intestine is unable to absorb nutrients from the food they eat.
- Intestinal or bowel failure means a person's intestine is no longer able to absorb enough nutrients from food and is usually caused by short bowel syndrome or a non-functioning bowel.



Tips for Friends

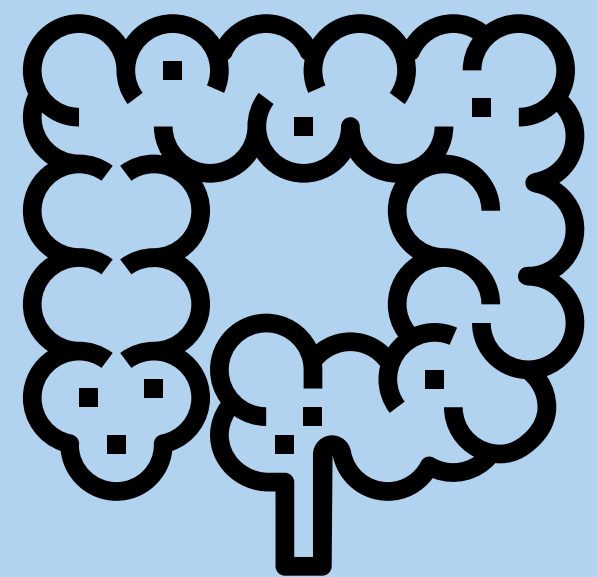
- Your friend will go through a lot of tests, procedures, and appointments.
- The transplant surgery will be long and the recovery can be very difficult.
- Your friend may be in the hospital for many weeks to even months.
- Even though you may not be able to visit your friend in-person at first, you should try and stay in touch virtually.
 - Call, text, tweet, Instagram, use all forms of social media!
- When you are able to see your friend again, remember he or she has a weakened immune system and can get an infection very easily.
 - Be sure to always wash your hands and do not visit if you are feeling sick.



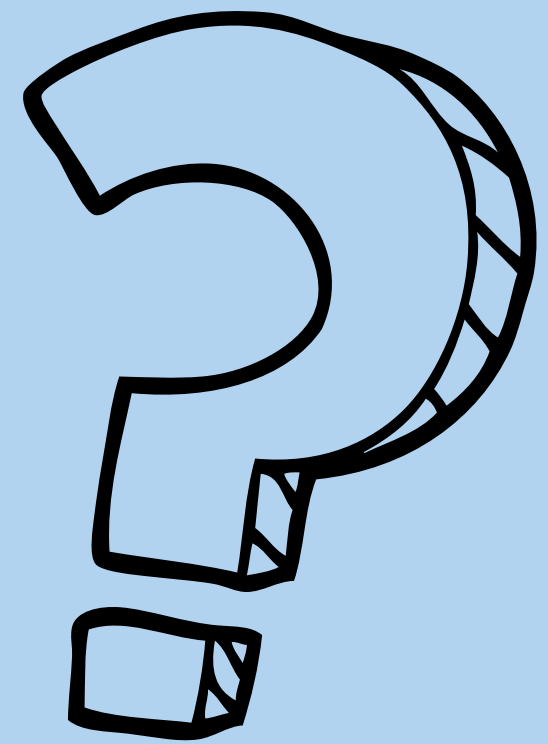
- Make sure your friend knows you are there for them.



- Listen to your friend and show support early on by educating yourself about intestinal transplant.



- Ask simple questions, such as "How are you feeling?" and be supportive when he or she answers.



- Visit, hang out and just spend time with your friend. Even if this just means sitting on the couch and binge-watching a TV show.



- Try to treat your friend as normal as possible, but still respect his or her limitations.



- If you are in school, keep them updated on school events, but do not go overboard and make them feel left out.



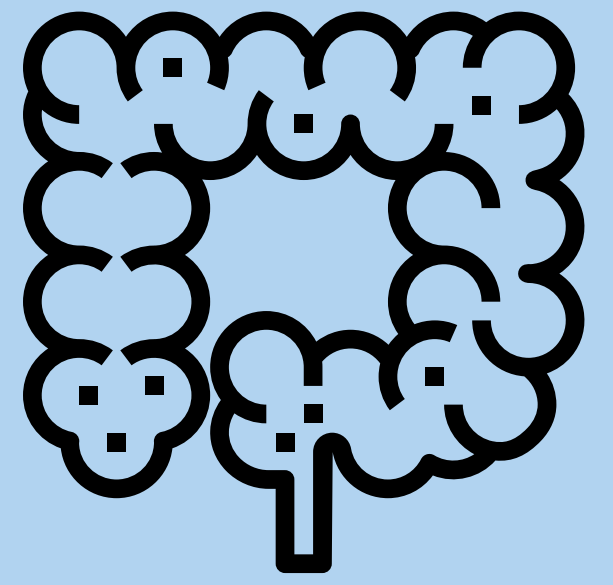
- Show support, but don't pity them.



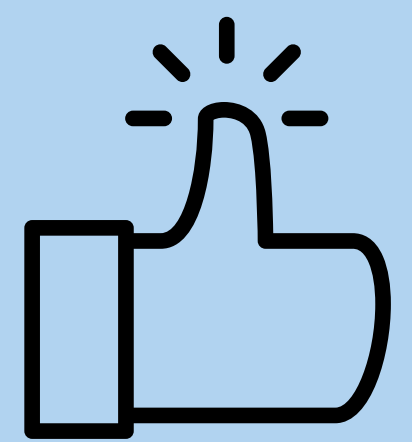
- When your friend does return to school, try to act as though they have been there the whole time. He or she may feel self-conscious and do not need you and your classmates staring them down.



It is also important to understand that an intestinal transplant is different from other transplants, such as a kidney or liver transplant. Intestinal transplant patients usually still **do not feel 100% better.**



As a friend, you should not assume that just because your friend received a transplant that he or she is cured and **"all better."**



Most often, intestinal transplant patients report they **"trade one set of problems for another set of problems."**



Talk to your friend and see how he or she is feeling post-transplant. See what worked and what didn't work. Talk about his or her emotions and **feelings.** Be **supportive.**



The "Dont's"

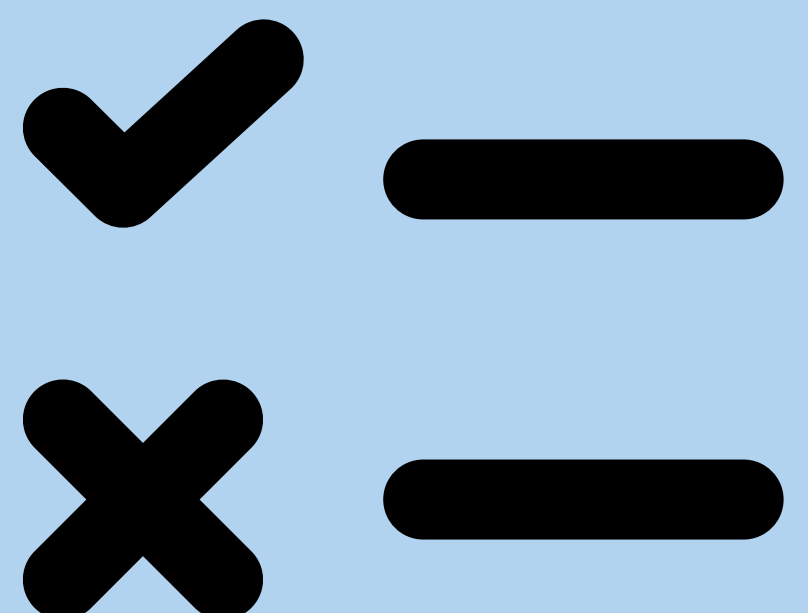
- **Constantly** talk about plans that your friend could not attend like big parties or events.



- Use your friend's transplant to get pity from others.



- Make false assumptions about the transplant because you are not well educated on the topic, such as it made them 100% better and they no longer have any difficulties.



Communication is Key

In the end, keeping up a good friendship is rooted in understanding one another. By educating yourself about intestinal transplant, you will better understand your friend, and form a better line of communication.

More Info?



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www.transplantunwrapped.org



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Citations:

1. Kosmach-Park B, Dennison J, Hiller J. Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle After Transplantation. Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle After Transplantation.
2. Health Resources and Services Administration. Partnering With Your Transplant Team. Rockville, MD: Healthcare Systems Bureau; 2008.

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