

# Stomach Upset Problems?

## Keep Your Transplant Team Informed

**R**eceiving an organ transplant gives patients a renewed lease on life and the opportunity to resume a normal, healthy lifestyle. Patients need to stay as healthy as possible to help protect their new transplanted organ. The focus for the transplant patient changes from waiting for a donor organ to learning how to manage their personal health and the health of the organ through nutrition, avoidance of infection, and using their immunosuppressive medications and managing the side effects.

medications, new medicines, side effects or any kind of discomfort they feel. Your team may have other options that can help.

Transplant medicines are meant to help prevent organ rejection and ensure long-term survival. While they are vital to helping you maintain a healthy transplanted organ, it is not unusual for patients to experience various side effects while taking transplant medications. Some side effects are more serious than others, which is why it is important to work closely and communicate often and openly with your transplant team.



GI (gastrointestinal) upset is one of the more common, but less severe side effects caused by some transplant medications.<sup>1</sup> Transplant medicines are vital but may cause patients to experience GI or stomach upset, from mild bloating and belching to vomiting and stomach pain.<sup>2</sup> Although these symptoms might not jeopardize the health of the transplanted organ they could cause enough discomfort or inconvenience to interfere with work or physical activity, as well as lifestyle and social activities.

Patients should speak with a member of their team if these side effects cause them any discomfort. While it may be awkward for patients to discuss, it is important to remember that many other transplant patients experience similar side effects, and the transplant team can provide the support and advice you need. Patients should feel free to ask for more information about their

Most importantly, patients should *never* stop taking their medicines – even if they experience unwanted side effects – without consulting their transplant team first. Likewise, patients shouldn't skip a dose, change the dosage amount, use an over-the-counter medication or change their dosing schedule without talking to their transplant team.

While tremendous strides have been made in transplantation over the past 20 years, the management of post-transplant concerns grows increasingly important to improve the patient's quality of life and ensure long-term success.

<sup>1</sup> Transplant Resource Guide. Food and Drug Interactions, Gastrointestinal Symptoms. [www.transplantawareness.org/resguide/chap14.htm](http://www.transplantawareness.org/resguide/chap14.htm) (Last accessed June 29, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Transplant Living: <http://www.transplantliving.org/afterthetransplant/sideeffects.aspx>