

# Changes to the Kidney Allocation System: What you need to know

Beginning in 2014, the way that kidneys are distributed to patients will change. We understand that waiting for a kidney transplant can be stressful, and we want our patients to know how this change will affect them.

## Why are these changes being made?

The United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS) is the group that oversees transplantation in the United States. Right now, each area of the US has its own system to determine who gets a kidney transplant. UNOS was asked by the US government to figure out a way to distribute kidneys for transplant that is fair to everyone, and that will make the most of the limited number of kidneys available. The new system will:

- Make more kidneys available to people waiting for a kidney transplant.
- Help reduce the need for a re-transplant by better matching kidneys with recipients.
- Make it easier for people to get a kidney transplant no matter where they live.

## What is different about the new system?

In the past, how long you have been on the waiting list was the main factor used to decide if you were going to get a kidney transplant when one became available. In the new point system, the waiting time is still important but there are many other factors considered. These include:

- Age.
- Cause of kidney failure.
- Recipient's anti-donor antibody sensitivity level (PRA).
- Estimated post-transplant survival score, or EPTS.  
EPTS tells us how long you are likely to live after the transplant. This score is determined by factors like:
  - Patient age
  - Length of time on dialysis
  - History of diabetes
  - History of organ transplant

There are also factors related to the donor that are considered in the point system. These include:

- Age.
- Kidney Donor Predictive Index, or KDPI.  
KDPI is a score that helps tell us how long the kidney will work after it has been transplanted. Kidneys are given a score from 1-100. The lower the score, the longer the kidney is expected to last. This score is determined by factors related to the donor like:
  - Height and weight
  - History of high blood pressure, diabetes, hepatitis B and hepatitis C
  - Cause of death
  - Race
  - Blood creatinine level. Blood creatinine level is a measure of how well the kidney works.

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### What will this mean for people waiting for a kidney transplant?

- Children and adults who are likely to live the longest after their transplant will get priority for kidneys that are more likely to work longer.
- You will get points for time spent on dialysis before you were put on the wait list.

### Does the Maine Transplant Program need to follow these rules?

Yes, every transplant program in the country is going to be using the same system.

### When will the change happen?

The system will change in 2014, although we do not know the precise date as yet.