

How to Look after Your Heart!

Stollery Children's Hospital
Pediatric Heart Transplant Program



Why is my heart special?

When you were little you had a transplant.

You were scared but Mommy and Daddy stayed with you.

The doctors had to take away your old heart and give you a new one.





?????Why??????

Your heart was not working properly. Your Mommy or Daddy couldn't make it better.

What Happened to Me?



First there were a lot of tests, people poked you and looked at you, they took pictures with big machines that can see inside you.

Then you had to wait until we could find the best heart for you.

How Long do I Have to Take Medicine?

You have to have medicine every day for the rest of your life.

Some of the medicine tastes yucky. You are on the most medicine right after transplant.

After 1 year you usually only have to take 4 or 5 kinds of medicine.



Why is Medicine Important?

- To answer that question we have to talk about the immune system



What is the Immune System?

- This is your defense system
- Pretend you have your own army inside your body.
- The soldiers of the army are trying to keep you safe.
- They chase away anything that they think will hurt you.
- Normally that is bacteria and viruses.



What happens to the army after Transplant?



- After your transplant your soldiers will think your new heart is a giant virus.
- They will try to chase away your new heart.
- Your heart hides behind the medicine so the soldiers can't chase it away.

How do I protect myself?

- The medicine will also hide the bugs that make you sick, how can you chase the bugs away?
- You will have to help your army to protect you by remembering to wash your hands
 - Every time you go to the bathroom
 - Before you eat
 - When you come home after school or after playing outside

When Will I be Normal?



You are a normal kid, just with a transplant.

You can play with your friends and eat junk food but you do have to be a little bit careful. If your friends are sick you can't visit them because you will get sick too.



Can I Play Baseball or Hockey?

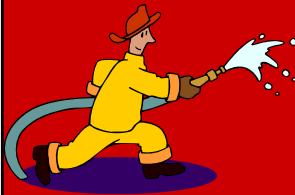


Yes you can. Lots of kids swim, play hockey, dance and all kinds of sports after transplant.

There are even "Olympic" games for transplant patients. Every two years there are Transplant Games around the world. You only have to be 5 years old to go to the games and race with other transplant kids in swimming and track and field.



What will I be when I grow up?



- You will be a strong Man or Woman
- You can be a fireman, a doctor or a teacher or whatever else you want to be.
- You can even be a Mommy or a Daddy some day.

