Pediatric Kidney Transplant Program

For further information or to schedule an appointment, please call the Transplant Program at 706-721-2888 or 1-800-736-2273, ext 2888.
What does it mean when my child’s kidneys are failing?
It means that the kidneys are no longer working to get rid of the fluids, wastes and salts that build up in the body. Blood pressure may get very high and the body won’t make enough red blood cells. All of this makes your child feel sick.

A kidney transplant may be needed. Everyone is born with two kidneys, but one is all anyone really needs. With a new kidney, your child will no longer need dialysis, but would still need to take special care of the new kidney and his body.

How old does my child have to be to get a new kidney?
It’s not how old your child is but how big he is. He must weigh at least 18 pounds.

Where will the new kidney come from?
A kidney can come from a living donor. Living donors can either be blood relatives to your child or unrelated. A kidney may also come from a deceased donor if your child has been placed on the waiting list managed by the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS). There is no way to predict exactly how long the wait will be for a deceased donor kidney. It is important for you to know that a living donor kidney transplant has a better success rate than a deceased donor kidney transplant.

Will my child have to come in for dialysis after surgery?
Dialysis is no longer needed once the new kidney is working.

Are there any food or drink limitations with a new kidney?
Some foods will still be limited, like those high in sugar and salt.

How painful will the surgery be?
Your child will be asleep when he gets the kidney and won’t feel a thing. If he feels pain after waking up, the nurse will give your child pain medicine.

Will my child get taller?
Although some children do not grow as tall as expected, most grow to within the normal adult range.

Will my child look or feel different after surgery?
Yes, at first your child could look a little puffy, but will improve as medications are changed. Your child will have more energy and feel better after the transplant.

Can my child return to school after surgery?
Yes. At first, your child will have frequent visits with his or her doctor. Your child is at risk for catching an infection during this time. He/she can return to school in about two months.

Will my child always take a lot of medicine?
Yes, at first, but over time, the doctor will slowly lessen them. However, your child will always be on medications to keep him from rejecting the new kidney.

What does rejection mean?
The body will see the kidney as different and try to attack it. Medications help to prevent rejection.

What happens if my child’s body rejects the new kidney?
Most of the time the doctors can stop the rejection and keep the kidney working. But if not, your child may need another kidney.

Will the new kidney last forever?
If your child takes good care of his body, the new kidney should last a very long time.