

What is BKV?

- BKV is a common virus that can infect anyone at any time but typically in early childhood. Most people (about 90%) have had BKV by the time they are adults.

What can BKV do?

- There are often no symptoms in kidney transplant patients.
- However, some transplant patients may experience changes in urine colour (red or brown) or have difficulty or pain when urinating.
- In some cases, BKV may cause a serious infection in the transplanted kidney and worsen your kidney function.

How is BKV spread?

- BKV likely spread through saliva, for example sharing food or utensils.
- Once BKV infects a person, the virus stays in the kidneys for life. Most of the time it is not active (latent).
- BKV can be spread from a transplanted kidney if the organ donor had BKV in their lifetime.

Why is BKV important after transplant?

- BKV can become active after transplant because of the anti-rejection medications you will need to take. Patients are more likely to have symptoms because of active BKV, especially if they did not have BKV before their transplant.

How do I know I have BKV?

- BKV is detected by a blood test. Your transplant clinic will regularly check your blood for the presence of the virus.

Does BKV need to be treated?

- If a transplant patient has an active infection, it is important for your transplant team to review and if possible, reduce your anti-rejection medications to allow your body's own immune system to fight the infection.

How is BKV treated?

- BKV is treated by cutting back on the anti-rejection medications. This is often enough for your immune system to keep the infection under control; however, it has to be done carefully to minimize the risk of rejection from too little anti-rejection medications.
- In more severe cases or if there is any concern for rejection, other oral or intravenous anti-viral medications may be prescribed by your transplant team.

How is BKV prevented?

- After the transplant, regular blood work is closely monitored to test for the presence of active BKV infection.
- Getting your blood work done on time is the best way to ensure that any active BKV infection is caught early to minimize the chance for the virus to cause injury to the transplanted kidney.