

# What It Takes to Prepare for Transplant as a Care Giver

By Dana Olson

The moment we learned Kevin was going on the transplant list, we started preparing. We made a list of what we would need to take and get done prior to getting "the call." I had to pack a bit more to take initially than he did because he would be in the hospital for at least ten days (it ended up being 31 days). I got duplicate toiletries to keep a suitcase packed for both of us and in the trunk of the car to be ready to go no matter where we might be when the call came in. We also made a call list of the people we needed to notify immediately when we got the call, as well as family and friends we would want to share info with once we got to St Louis for the transplant. We also had more supplies and clothes that we would be needing but not immediately. Our daughter came by our house after we left and picked up the rest for us on her way to the transplant center.

The hard part is not thinking about things that you have in your home kitchen - spices, utensils, pans, etc. The apartment we stayed in had a sparse amount of cooking utensils. You might want to buy some inexpensive things like a couple of dish towels, a couple of large bath towels, a tablecloth and placemats, and a small crockpot.

When considering where to stay if you don't live within a 50-mile radius of the transplant center, please consider these things: 1) Staying close to the transplant center so while your care partner is in the hospital, you don't have to travel far. 2) The closeness makes getting to 5-day a week rehab plus lab draws, chest rays, and every 2-week clinic appts easy. 3) Consider a place with a parking garage - no getting out in the rain, snow, etc., and is much safer for you and your vehicle.

We made sure that we had all electronic Bill Pay set up as well as receiving bills electronically/paperless. Or consider having a neighbor check your mailbox periodically at home to collect it and mail it to you occasionally.

Use the Transplant Guidebook you should have received on your first visit. It has information on things you may need and how to prepare. Google was my best friend as far as looking for places to eat and buy groceries!