Living Donor Kidney Transplant
Frequently Asked Questions

A living donor is someone who is willing to donate one of their kidneys. Most living donors return to a normal lifestyle after surgery. At Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center, we perform more than 100 living donor transplants each year.

Benefits of Living Donor Transplants

Living donor transplants are special. A living donor kidney is a better kidney than a deceased donor organ for several reasons:

- A living donor kidney means the patient is not on a long waiting list for a deceased donor kidney.
- A living donor kidney has a first year success rate of 94%, and identically matched persons may have greater than a 95% success rate.
- There is no preservation time with the living donor kidney. It can be walked from one operating room to another, and 30 minutes later, the transplanted kidney is working in the recipient.
- A living donor transplant allows the surgical team to plan a surgery date to allow for the best health of the patient and donor.

Becoming a Living Kidney Donor

To be a kidney donor, you need to:

- Be in good general health, such as free from diabetes, cancer, kidney disease, and heart disease.

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Learn more about your health care.
Most living donors are between 18 and 60 years of age, and sometimes 60+ years, depending on their medical history. Your gender and race do not matter.

A matching blood type is **not** a requirement for living kidney donation. We have a donor exchange program. It is possible to donate even when blood or tissue types do not match.

Have tests to see if your health is good enough to be a living donor.

**Testing if You Want to be a Living Donor**

These tests must be reviewed and approved by the transplant team to be selected as a living donor.

- Contact the Pre-Transplant Office. You will be given a packet about the process of kidney donation.
- Tests: You will have blood tests and be asked to submit blood pressure readings. You will have tissue typing, urine collections, chest x-ray, EKG, and other tests to check your health.
- The transplant team will review your file. If all testing is acceptable, you will be scheduled for a computerized tomogram (CT) of the kidneys. If the CT shows healthy kidneys, then surgery will be scheduled.

After donation, you may return to a normal lifestyle. There are always possible risks with any surgery; however, these are reduced by the extensive evaluation done on all donors.

**If I’m selected as a living donor, what happens next?**

If you are chosen to be a living donor, expect to be in the hospital for about 4 days. The recipient will be in the hospital 4 to 8 days. The usual recovery time is 4 to 6 weeks after transplant.

**We ask that you check with your doctor before taking any medicines.**
Who pays my medical bills?
Your evaluation and surgery is paid for by the transplant recipient’s medical insurance.

However, some expenses are not covered, including:

- Travel and lodging expenses (if any). Some donors may qualify for help with travel and lodging. Ask the staff for details.
- Lost wages from work if you do not have ill or vacation time. Talk with your employer about time off from work if you want to be a kidney donor.

What about my life after donating a kidney?
Most living donors return to a normal lifestyle after the transplant surgery. There are always possible risks with any surgery; however, these are reduced by the testing done on all donors.

For your continued health:

- Go to your follow-up doctor visits. Have yearly physical exams.
- Avoid taking any medicines with Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or Naproxen (Aleve).
- Talk with your doctor or pharmacists before taking any arthritis medicines that may harm your remaining kidney.

Where can I learn more about living donor transplant?

- Call the Pre-Transplant Office at Wexner Medical Center for more information at (614) 293-6724 or 1-800-293-8965.
- Review the below websites for more information

National Websites for Living Donors (alphabetical order)

- Donate Life America, a coalition with information on living donor information, and donating among the African American populations at www.donatelife.net
- **Done Vida**, a website focusing on Hispanic and Spanish-speaking living donors at [www.donevida.org](http://www.donevida.org)

- **Living Donors**, to read posts and chat with other living donors at [www.livingdonorsonline.org](http://www.livingdonorsonline.org)

- **Living Organ Donor Advocate Program, called LODAP**, has information to prepare living donors through the donation process at [www.lodap.com](http://www.lodap.com)

- **National Kidney Foundation**, for information on kidney disease, transplant and living kidney donors at [www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org)

- **National Kidney Registry**, for information and resources about donor exchange at [www.kidneyregistry.org](http://www.kidneyregistry.org)


- **Transplant Living**, has information for both live organ donors and transplant information for recipients at [www.transplantliving.org](http://www.transplantliving.org)

- United Network of Organ Sharing, has information and resources for living organ donors at [www.unos.org](http://www.unos.org)

- **US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)** for information and resources on transplant and organ donations at [www.organdonor.gov](http://www.organdonor.gov)

- **US Transplant**, has data about transplant and living donors from local procurement agencies at [www.ustransplant.org](http://www.ustransplant.org)

### Local Websites for Living Donors
- **Lifeline of Ohio** has information about transplant and donation from the local procurement agency at [www.lifelineofohio.org](http://www.lifelineofohio.org)

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- Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).