

Practical support

Emotional and

# Donating a kidney

What to expect

This leaflet is for anyone considering donating a kidney to a relative, a friend or via paired donation. It tells you what is involved for donors before, during and after donation.

The content has been put together with the input and support of those who have been through living kidney donation. Whilst it shouldn't replace valuable face-to-face meetings with members of your transplant team, it offers practical step-by-step guidance on the general investigations, procedures and checks. You can also use it to record your progress on your journey through donation. Please be aware that every kidney unit is different and the sequence of tests may vary.



Donating a kidney is a big decision and be sure to take up every opportunity to talk to members of the transplant team and to independent assessors about any fears or anxieties you may have.

In the UK only people over 18 years old can donate an organ and all potential donors must have medical and psychological checks to ensure that they are fit to donate. These stages are outlined throughout this leaflet.

## **Pre donation**

#### Meeting your Transplant Coordinator

The first step will be to meet the Living Donor Transplant Coordinator at your local kidney unit. These experienced nurses, who are members of the transplant team, are always on hand to provide information and support to donors (and recipients) before and after their transplant.

All challenges and risks are explained and donors will be assured that they can withdraw their wish to donate at any time.

#### Transplant information group session

Many kidney units arrange group meetings when donors (and recipients) can meet and hear from key health professionals in the transplant care team and ask questions.

Often those who have been through living donation are invited to come back and share their personal experiences too.

#### **Medical history**

Weight, height, blood pressure and urine analysis checks are undertaken to check that you are medically fit to donate.

After this, a tissue typing cross match is done. This is a blood test to check whether the recipient and donor can be matched.

Further blood tests are also taken to test for kidney function, liver and bone profiles, full blood counts, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV, Cytomegalovirus and Epstein Barr virus.

Done	Date
	<b>C</b>
Done	Date
Done	Date
Done	

#### Talking to a counsellor

The counsellor's role is to explore concerns and anxieties, as well as talking about practical issues of reimbursement for loss of earnings, expenses and possible childcare needs.

#### Kidney function tests - blood tests

#### **Measuring creatinine**

Creatinine is produced naturally in our bodies and is removed by the kidneys. Measures are taken and if levels are high this shows that our kidneys are not working well.

#### **Glomerular filtration (GFR)**

GFR is a measure that assesses the ability of the kidney to 'clear' the blood of particular substances.

#### ECG

This test is used to check that the heart is working well.

#### X-rays

A number of x-rays, including a chest x-ray and an x-ray of the kidneys may be taken.

#### Abdominal ultrasound

This scan checks the health of your kidneys and surrounding organs.

Done	Date

Done Date

Done	Date
D	Data
Done	Date
Done	Date

#### **CT** angiogram

The CT angiogram verifies the anatomy of both kidneys, their size and position and checks for any abnormalities.

#### Meeting your kidney doctor (nephrologist)

As a donor you will have your own kidney doctor/consultant. The recipient will have a different kidney doctor to avoid conflict of interest.

#### Meeting the transplant surgeon

The transplant surgeon will take another detailed medical history, review the tests and explain all the risks once more. This appointment may include the recipient.

#### **External assessment**

The Human Tissue Authority states that the donor must be seen by an independent assessor, who will act to ensure that the donation is informed and voluntary.

The donor and recipient must have a transplant date and be deemed suitable for living donor transplantation.

All donors and recipients need to see a local Independent Assessor (IA) who can recommend approval for the transplant operation to go ahead.

They are independent of the healthcare team and make a report ensuring that both parties understand what is involved in giving and receiving an organ. Consent must be given freely and voluntarily.

The relationship between the recipient and donor will be confirmed and various documents for this will be required e.g. passport, birth certificate, marriage certificate, photos etc.

Done	Date
Done	Date
Done	Date
Done	Date
<u></u>	

## Donation

#### Surgery

Your transplant surgeon will talk to you about the surgery. Keyhole surgery is generally used, but open surgery may occasionally be necessary.

### **After surgery**

#### **Recovery time**

You will need to spend 3–5 days in hospital for the operation. You may then need a further 3–8 weeks off work – depending on the type of surgery used and the type of work that you do.

#### Medication

If you need painkillers to take home, these will be supplied by the hospital pharmacist.

#### Sick note

If you are working, you can get a sick note from the hospital for your time in hospital and then from your GP once home.

#### Transport

It is important to arrange your transport home as you will need to wait at least 3–4 weeks before driving, to allow full healing.

Done	Date
Done	Dato
_	
Done	Date
Done	Date

Done

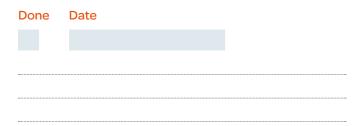
Date

#### Follow up appointments

You will be given an appointment with your surgeon approximately two weeks after surgery. You may have a number of blood tests to check your health and the surgical area will be checked.

You will then be given an appointment with your kidney doctor approximately six weeks after surgery and more blood and urine tests will be taken.

All donors continue to be assessed on an annual basis for life which will include blood tests. Donors may also like to continue regular check-ups with their GP.



#### Expenses

Donors will usually be reimbursed legitimate expenses to a level agreed by the local healthcare provider. You will be given an expense form to complete.

Donors may also be reimbursed for loss of earnings by their local healthcare provider and you may be given appropriate forms to complete for this.

Donors should check with their health and car insurance companies that premiums will not change.





As mentioned earlier, not all the stages during donation will happen in the order listed.

# How to find out more

If you would like to talk about the tests and assessments in more detail or you have any other questions, ask your Living Donor Transplant Team. They are always happy to help you during your journey through donating a kidney to save a life.



You can also find out more about organ donation from NHS Blood and Transplant. Visit **www.organdonation.nhs.uk** 



Kidney Care UK provides support, advice, counselling and financial help for kidney patients and their families.

We fund the improvement of renal equipment, services and specialist staff. We also invest in research and help to influence government and NHS policy. To access our full range of services, please use the contact details below.

Visit our website at **www.kidneycareuk.org** Call us on **01420 541424** 

Prepared by Kidney Care UK with support from renal transplant Coordinators at South West Thames Renal Unit as well as patients and their families.

**Kidney Care UK** 3 The Windmills, St Mary's Close, Turk Street, Alton GU34 1EF **T:** 01420 541424 | **F:** 01420 89438 info@kidneycareuk.org | kidneycareuk.org **F** ormerly





© Kidney Care UK. Kidney Care UK is the operating name of the British Kidney Patient Association. A charitable company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales (1228114). A charity registered in England and Wales (270288). KCL005 05/17