



### **How will I know if I can be a donor?**

You will have a thorough medical, surgical and psychological evaluation to establish that you are fit and healthy to donate. A number of people who wish to donate find that they are not able to do so because health problems are discovered through the evaluation process. Members of the healthcare team involved in your evaluation include counselors, coordinators and social workers.

### **How long is the process to be tested?**

We have streamlined our living donor evaluation process called Fast Track Evaluation and can tell you if you qualify to be a donor in only 4-6 weeks.

### **How safe is to donate a kidney?**

Living donation has an excellent safety record. The first living donor surgery was done in Boston in December of 1954. The surgical techniques have evolved over almost 60 years and now donation is possible through small abdominal incisions and a 2-3 day hospital admission. Currently, nearly 6000 people each year donate a kidney and return to their daily lives within 4-6 weeks.

### **Do I need to be related to the person who may receive the kidney?**

While it is commonly family members who offer to be kidney donors, there are often spouses, friends, members of the community, or people from the same place of worship who can be highly successful kidney donors. Being related is not a requirement to donate a kidney.

### **Do I need to be a blood type match to donate?**

If you are not a blood type match, you can still be a donor through a Kidney Paired Donation. In Paired Donation, pairs of people who do not match each other are matched with other individuals through a national kidney registry. Since 2012, our center has successfully participated with other transplant hospitals in donor exchange programs. This new alternative has resulted in a significant number of new transplants that otherwise could

not have been possible. The most important factors in kidney donation are good health and willingness to donate.

**What if I don't have a specific person in mind to donate to?**

The majority of patients in need of a kidney transplant don't have a potential living donor. Altruistic, or anonymous, donation can make a huge difference for these patients. Our confidential process will match you with a recipient in need

**Are there any risks to donating a kidney?**

All operations carry some risk and this is no different for living donation. Donors are at risk of infections (such as wound or urine) and, more rarely, bleeding or blood clots. There is a very small risk of death for the donor: this is estimated at 3.1 in 10,000 for this operation.

**Are there any long-term risks?**

There is a possibility of a rise in blood pressure and excess protein in your urine. However studies have shown that for most people there is no long-term effect on the health of the donor or your remaining kidney.

**Will I have to change my lifestyle after donating?**

There is no specific reason why you should not be able to lead a normal healthy life as before.

**Will donating my kidney affect a future pregnancy or fathering a child?**

The small amount of data available shows that, after donating one kidney, there is no evidence to suggest an increased risk of complications during pregnancy. A man's fertility will not be affected.

**Will I be covered by my health insurance?**

The evaluation testing, surgery and normal follow-up care is covered by the recipient's insurance. Current federal law prohibits insurance companies from denying anyone health insurance. If you have specific concerns you may speak with our financial coordinator.

### **What if I live in a different part of the country from the person I am donating to?**

You can still donate. The transplant team can arrange for most of your donor evaluation to take place at a hospital near you if that is more convenient for you. Usually the donation will take place in the hospital where the person you are donating to is cared for. There are organizations that could help you with the travel and living expenses.

### **How long does the donor evaluation process take?**

This can vary depending on the situation with the recipient. In general, this will take about four to six weeks. There is variation depending upon where you live and what tests you may require. Wherever possible, the evaluation is tailored to your needs and commitments.

### **How much time will I need to take off work?**

We will try to arrange the tests before the operation around your work schedule to minimize disruption to your job. It is sometimes possible to arrange for some of this to be done locally if the donor lives a long way from the transplant program. The operation and recovery period varies depending on surgery, your individual recovery and the type of work you will be resuming. Many people that have a desk job are back to work in a few weeks. If your job is physically demanding, you might need six weeks or more to resume all your prior activities.

### **How long will I be in hospital?**

This varies depending on your individual recovery. Most donors are in the hospital for two or three days.

### **Will I need to take any medication after donating?**

You will need to take some pain medication immediately after the operation and during the recovery period. However, you should not need any long-term medication as a result of kidney donation.

### **What about follow-up?**

You would usually be seen by the transplant program one or two weeks after the surgery. In addition, the transplant program will monitor your kidney function for two years after the donation.

### **Do some donors have trouble making the decision?**

Some people make the decision easily. Others go through some soul-searching before deciding. Being afraid of donating a kidney or feeling guilty about not wanting to donate is quite normal. The only “right” decision is the one that makes you, the potential donor, feel comfortable. Finding out more information about living donation and what it involves may help you with this decision.

### **Can I speak to somebody who has donated?**

The living donation team at your local transplant program should be able to arrange this for you.

### **What if I decide that being a donor isn't for me?**

You have the right to withdraw your offer at any time and you would be supported in your decision by the transplant team. The potential recipient would never know the reason for your withdrawal from the program.