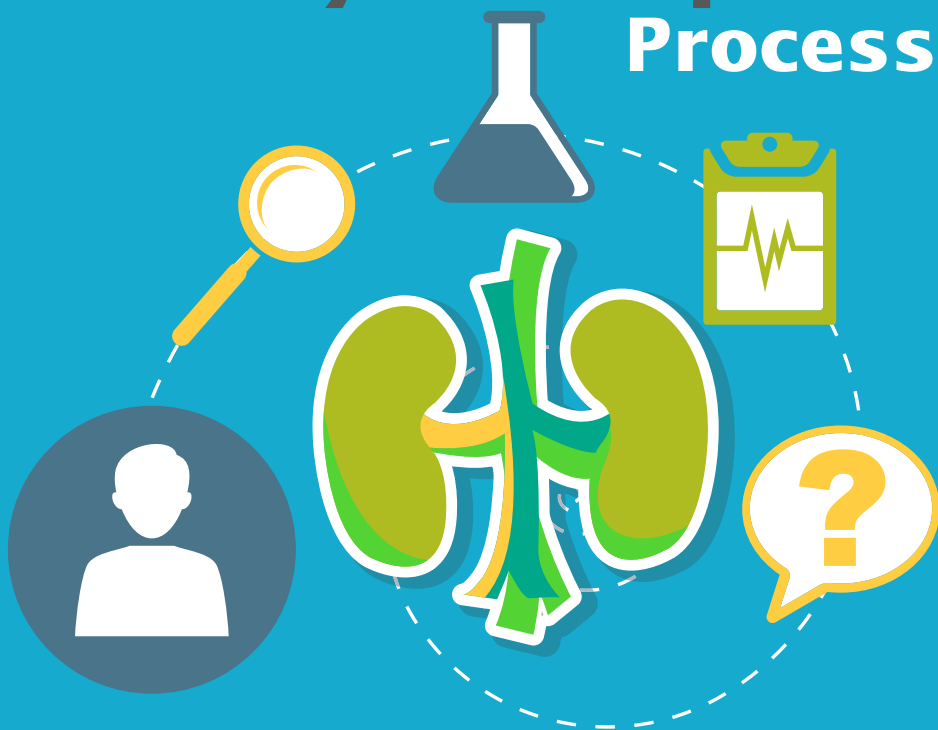


The Living Donor Kidney Transplant Process



*A step-by-step guide for
living kidney donors*

Living Kidney Donation Program



London Health Sciences Centre

Multi-Organ Transplant Program

Living Donor Information

- Donors can live normal healthy lives with one kidney.
- Donors must come forward voluntarily.
- Donors must not be under any pressure or forced to donate.
- Donors must be in good physical and emotional health and give informed consent for the surgery.
- Donors must be at least 18 years of age.
- There is no strict upper age limit for donors.
- At any step in the process, donors can choose not to proceed.

Thinking of becoming a living kidney donor?

There are many reasons why a transplant from a living donor may be the best option for a patient. Transplant outcomes are generally better with kidneys from living donors than from deceased donors. Outcomes are best for patients who receive a transplant before needing to start dialysis. With careful planning, a patient can avoid the need for dialysis and go straight to transplant with a kidney from a living donor. Living donor transplants can be arranged to optimize timing for both the donor and the recipient.

While some living donors are related to the recipient, they don't have to be. Living donors can be siblings, parents, children, or other relatives. A donor can also be a friend, spouse, relative through marriage, co-worker, or a member of the recipient's community.



Chris, kidney recipient

The Referral Process



Step 1 Initial Assessment



Step 2 Laboratory and Diagnostic Testing



Step 3 Evaluation and Medical Imaging



Step 4 The Decision to Donate



Step 5 Surgery and Recovery

*John, living donor,
and his wife Jonna,
support person*



Getting Started

The living donor evaluation process is designed to make sure you are healthy and that it is safe for you to donate. It is important that you don't feel pressured by others to donate, and that you make a well-informed decision. At any point along the way, you may decide not to proceed.



STEP 1: INITIAL ASSESSMENT

As a potential donor, you can begin the process by contacting the Living Kidney Donation Program at University Hospital, London Health Sciences Centre either by phone (519.685.8500 ext. 33552) or by email (livingkidneydonation@lhsc.on.ca).

You will need to complete a medical and social history questionnaire and provide confirmation of your blood type. A blood test for this can be arranged through your family doctor or the Living Donation Program. Your blood donor card is also acceptable.

Who can I donate to?

If you have blood type:	You can donate to someone with blood type:
O	O, A, B, or AB
A	A or AB (possibly B or O)
B	B or AB
AB	AB (possibly B)

Is it better to be related to the donor?

Not necessarily. Being genetically related can be beneficial, but it is not required. Anti-rejection medications have improved, making non-related donation a good option.



STEP 2: LABORATORY AND DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

You will need to do a number of tests to ensure it is safe for you to donate. Some tests can be done close to your home or work place, which can be especially helpful if you live far away. A crossmatch test will be arranged at LHSC to check compatibility between you and your intended recipient.

What if I am not a match for my recipient?

If you and your recipient do not directly match, a paired exchange may be considered. The Kidney Paired Donation Program enables incompatible donor and recipient pairs to proceed with the transplant by exchanging kidneys with another incompatible pair. Non-directed anonymous donors can also be part of this program.

<https://blood.ca/en/organs-tissues/becoming-live-kidney-donor>



STEP 3: EVALUATION AND MEDICAL IMAGING

If the initial test results are within normal range, and you decide you want to proceed, your next step is to meet the Living Donation Team at University Hospital. You are required to come at least two days to meet with team members and have more tests and imaging. The team includes nurse coordinators, a social worker, donor nephrologists and surgeons. Medical tests and imaging include a chest x-ray, ECG, ultrasound and CT angiogram.

Potential donors will need cancer screening (mammogram, Pap smear, fecal occult blood testing) according to guidelines from the Canadian Cancer Society. This can be arranged ahead of time by your family doctor.

What's the purpose of the evaluation?

These appointments help us to make sure donation is safe for the donor, and they provide an opportunity to discuss the benefits and risks of donation. This will help you, as a potential donor, to make an informed decision.

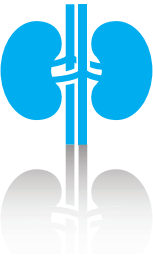


Arlene, spouse and kidney donor to Reuel



STEP 4: THE DECISION TO DONATE

The Living Donation Team determines if you are physically and emotionally fit to be a donor, but ultimately the final decision rests with you. It is important not to feel pressured by others to donate, and to make a well-informed decision. If you choose not to proceed with donation, the recipient team will only be told that you are not a suitable donor. Specific results regarding your assessment are kept confidential.



STEP 5: SURGERY AND RECOVERY

Choosing a surgical date usually requires discussions among the donor, recipient, surgeons, physicians, and transplant coordinators.

As the surgery date draws near, both you and the recipient will need to come for a follow-up assessment, which includes bloodwork and other appointments to prepare for your surgery.

Surgical procedures have advanced, and in most cases our transplant surgeons are able to use minimally invasive (laparoscopic) surgery.

Following surgery and throughout your life you will require routine monitoring to make sure you stay healthy living with one kidney.

What's the recovery time after surgery?

Donors usually spend 2-4 nights in the hospital and require between 6-8 weeks of additional recovery time.

Arlene, kidney donor



What are the risks of donating a kidney?

Donating a kidney is major surgery. The risks include the possibility of infection, allergic reaction to general anesthesia, pneumonia, and formation of a blood clot. The risk of dying from donating a kidney is 0.03%. The risk of serious complications is about 1-2%. Donors commonly have incision discomfort, constipation, abdominal discomfort, and nausea for the first week or two following surgery.

Financial considerations

The medical appointments and tests associated with donor assessment and surgery are covered if you are a Canadian resident. Donors from outside the country are also covered for assessment and surgery if it is done in Canada. If international donors complete testing in their own country, they may have to pay for the tests.

You should investigate your health insurance plans before committing to the surgery. If you have sick time or short-term disability benefits through work, you may qualify for sick benefits as described by the plan. If you have no sick benefits through work, but have made contributions to the unemployment insurance program in Canada, you should be eligible to receive employment insurance sick benefits provided you meet the number of qualifying hours of work in the past year. If you are an Ontario resident who is self-employed without sick benefits, an application for loss of income subsidy benefits can be made through the Program for Reimbursing Expenses of Living Donors.

Program for Reimbursing Expenses of Living Donors (PRELOD)

The Program for Reimbursing Expenses of Living Donors (PRELOD) may provide some financial assistance to living kidney donors to help cover some costs related to travel, parking, meals and accommodation during the assessment and at the time of surgery. PRELOD is administered through the Trillium Gift of Life Network. Eligibility for PRELOD will be discussed during your assessment.

For those coming from Northern Ontario, you must apply for the Northern Travel Grant first. Some expenses that are not covered through this grant may be covered through PRELOD.

THE ODDS ARE GOOD

On average, the transplanted kidney from a living donor generally lasts the recipient 15 to 18 years.

If you want to speak with a previous kidney donor, contact Kidney Connect at 1-877-202-8222. This service is provided through the Kidney Foundation of Canada: www.kidneyconnect.ca.

Need more information?

Living Donation Program

Room B3-240A
University Hospital, LHSC
339 Windermere Road
London, ON N6A 5A5

Phone: 519.685.8500 ext. 33552

Fax: 519.663.3141

Web: www.lhsc.on.ca/livingkidneydonation

Email: livingkidneydonation@lhsc.on.ca

Additional Resources

Living Kidney Donation at LHSC (video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XI7uYdwyQE>

Multi-Organ Transplant Program, LHSC
www.lhsc.on.ca/transplant

Trillium Gift of Life Network
www.giftoflife.on.ca

PRELOD Program
[www.giftoflife.on.ca/resources/pdf/PRELOD FAQ.pdf](http://www.giftoflife.on.ca/resources/pdf/PRELOD%20FAQ.pdf)

Kidney Foundation of Canada, Ontario branch
www.kidney.on.ca

Kidney Foundation of Canada, National branch
www.kidney.ca

Kidney Paired Donation Program (Canadian Blood Services)
<https://blood.ca/en/organs-tissues/becoming-live-kidney-donor>

Canadian Cancer Society Guidelines
www.cancer.ca/screening



You may also find this brochure useful:

***Finding a Donor:
Getting the Word Out
A step-by-step guide for reaching
out to potential donors***



**Living Donation Program
519.685.8500 ext 33552
livingkidneydonation@lhsc.on.ca**



London Health Sciences Centre
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