

How to ask for a living donor

Asking someone to give you a kidney is not an easy thing to do. Although it is scary, the worst case scenario is that your friends and family won't be able to be a donor. Some of you will have no problem asking and the process will be very smooth. Others might be nervous and we are here to provide some advice. The first step is remembering that this is a big decision and everyone handles situations differently.

A few tips are:

- Educate friends and family members about your disease and how a transplant works
- Think about providing information and the opportunity to connect more than just asking
- Don't pressure anyone and allow your potential donors to volunteer or decline
- Provide additional details to those that are interested
- Be prepared to hear a no or a delayed response
- Remember these people support you and care about you so share what this means to you
- Sometimes you can even get a relative to be your champion and do the heavy lifting of asking for you

Even if you can't find a living donor, there are still plenty of options available to you. It is quite normal for there to be concerns or fears. Talking over the concerns and sharing as much information as possible can help remove the fear. Also, make sure that you are presenting all of the information to your potential donor, not just the positives, but the potential negatives as well. Your medical team will help you explain all of this, too. Leaving out crucial details could put serious strain on your relationship or even cause your potential donor to not qualify or decide to not be your donor. Remember these people care about you deeply and would treat you the same way!

There are several possible outcomes from having a live donor.

- Your relationship is strengthened further because of the process or your relationship is strained due to the stress
- The organ survives for many years without complications or the organ can be rejected quickly
- You or the donor live long happy health lives or unfortunately one or both of you could face complications.

Risks are rare and many donors live normal lives with only one kidney. Normally donors spend a few weeks recovering from the surgery and can continue with the activities they did

before the donation. The main symptoms after the surgery for donors are tenderness, pain and itching as it heals. Some people are born with only one kidney and live normal healthy lives regardless.

Living donors also need to be aware of costs involved. Normally the kidney recipient's insurance covers the cost of the surgery. Travel to and from the center as well as time missed from work are normally not directly covered. There are organizations such as the National Living Donor Assistance Center that can help with some of these costs. Also, some employers may cover employees under the Family Medical Leave Act. Some states have programs that will let a living donor deduct an amount from their income taxes to help offset some of the costs.

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