Living Kidney Donor Program

Introduction

Aaron received a kidney from his sister Jocelyn.
Recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* magazine as a top hospital caring for patients with kidney disease, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center’s transplant program is one of the largest in the country and among the busiest kidney transplant programs in the region. Ohio State’s Comprehensive Transplant Center is the only adult transplant center in central Ohio, performing more than 8,500 transplants since it was established in 1967. We perform approximately 200 kidney transplants a year.
Why Choose to be a Living Kidney Donor?

Patients with end-stage renal disease have three options for treatment: dialysis, a kidney transplant from a deceased donor or a kidney transplant from a living donor.

Dialysis is only a temporary solution. While a patient can remain on dialysis for many years, it is not a cure for kidney disease. It is also time-consuming, with treatment schedules as frequent as three times each week for four hours each session.

Transplantation is a preferred alternative, but the demand for donated organs is greater than the number of available organs, and demand is steadily increasing. United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), the organization responsible for allocating deceased donor organs for transplant, reports there are more than 99,000 candidates waiting for a kidney transplant. In 2015, only 8,250 kidneys were donated from deceased donors.

The best option for a patient waiting for a kidney is to receive one from a living donor. Wait times for patients with living donors are reduced from years to months, and transplant recipients have better outcomes with kidneys from living donors. According to the National Kidney Registry, kidneys transplanted from living donors may last nearly twice as long as kidneys from deceased donors.

At any given time, about 575 patients in Ohio State’s transplant program are awaiting a kidney transplant – many whose lives could be changed by a living donor.

Patients with a living donor can receive a transplant more quickly, potentially avoiding dialysis. The wait for a kidney from a deceased donor can be many years.

About half of the transplants performed at Ohio State use kidneys from live donors. Often these donors are family members, but a growing number are friends or co-workers. There are also people who choose to donate a kidney without having a specific recipient in mind. These extraordinary people are called non-directed or altruistic donors.

Anne (right) received a kidney from her son Billy (left)
Mythbusters:
The Facts About Living Kidney Donation

**MYTH:** I'm too old to be a living kidney donor.
**FACT:** Individuals considered for living donation are usually between 18-65 years of age. Gender and race are not factors in determining a successful match. An individual should be in good overall physical and mental health and free from uncontrolled high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and organ disease.

**MYTH:** My religion does not permit organ donation.
**FACT:** All major religions practiced in the United States support organ and tissue donation and consider it a generous act of caring. Speak with your religious leader about donation.

**MYTH:** I can't afford to donate a kidney. It is too expensive.
**FACT:** The recipient's insurance generally pays the cost of the living donor's evaluation, testing and surgery, therefore the donor should not incur any medical expenses. However, time away from work as well as travel expenses need to be considered. A new Ohio law gives state employees time off from work for donating. Financial assistance for travel and lodging may be available to qualifying donors through the National Living Kidney Donor Assistance Center.

**MYTH:** I can't give a kidney to a family member. I could develop the same genetic kidney disease.
**FACT:** Living kidney donors are thoroughly evaluated to ensure good health and organ function prior to donation. If the evaluation shows a donor is at risk for developing a genetic kidney disease, the donation will not proceed. Most kidney diseases are not genetic in nature, and kidney disease most often strikes both kidneys simultaneously.

**MYTH:** If I donate a kidney, I won't be as healthy with just one kidney.
**FACT:** A research study of more than 90,000 patients found that living with one kidney did not put anyone at excess risk of dying prematurely versus living with two kidneys. If you are healthy and you are free from any major diseases, living with one kidney after donation is going to be the same as living with two kidneys.

**MYTH:** I don't have the time to be in the hospital for weeks after donating.
**FACT:** Most donors are eating and drinking the day after surgery and able to go home on the second day after surgery. About a week after surgery, donors generally report feeling tired but ready to go about normal activities. For the first six weeks, donors are restricted from lifting anything over five to ten pounds. After that six-week period, all normal life activities can be resumed.

**MYTH:** I don't want a big scar.
**FACT:** Since 1999, laparoscopic surgery has been used for kidney donation surgery. The largest incision area is approximately three to four inches in length and is located in the lowest part of the abdomen. Also there are two to three one-inch incisions in the upper abdomen.
Qualifications
For Living Donors

To qualify as a living donor, an individual should be in good overall physical and mental health and free from uncontrolled high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and organ disease.

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Living donor candidates must take a blood test to determine blood type compatibility with the recipient.

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<th>DONORS WITH BLOOD TYPE</th>
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If the donor and recipient have compatible blood types, the donor undergoes a medical history review and a complete physical examination, in addition to tests to ensure compatibility. The donor and recipient may also have to complete a psychological evaluation. It is important to note that even if a donor’s blood type is not compatible with the recipient’s, there is still the option to be an indirect donor for your recipient. Please review the information on Kidney Paired Donation on page 5.

The decision to become a living donor is a voluntary one, and the donor may change his or her mind at any time during the process. The donor’s decision and reasons are kept confidential.

Education is the most important component in the decision to become a living kidney donor. If you are considering donation, you can speak with a living donor nurse coordinator at the Ohio State Comprehensive Transplant Center by calling 800-293-8965.
Ohio State’s Pre-Transplant Office will schedule an evaluation appointment with you that will include medical testing, an education session, evaluation by a surgeon and a nephrologist (kidney doctor) and a conversation with a donor advocate. Additional testing will also be scheduled. Here’s what you can expect during your evaluation process:

- You will need to provide a copy of your blood type or have blood drawn to confirm blood type (the Pre-Transplant Office will provide an order for blood draw)
- 24-hour blood pressure monitoring
- Women donors will need to provide a copy of their last Pap test result, breast exam and mammogram report. A Release of Information form is included in this packet. Please sign the form and forward it to your doctor’s office. If your Pap test or mammogram is more than a year old, you should schedule an appointment for new exams
- You may need to complete a Glucose Tolerance Test (GTT) if requested by the Pre-Transplant Office
- 24-hour urine collection (this will be performed twice)
- Chest X-ray and EKG (tests to determine heart and lung health)
- CT angiogram of kidneys (an X-ray test to evaluate the kidneys and blood vessels)
- Full day at Transplant Clinic for education, meeting with transplant coordinator, psychosocial evaluation, surgical and medical evaluations, completion of tests
- Any additional testing as needed
- Final pre-donation evaluation studies (done seven to ten days before surgery)
For more information about living kidney donation, please call 800-293-8965, option 3.

Living Kidney Donor Program

The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center
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