

Living Kidney Donor Questionnaire

Potential Kidney Donors

Thank you for your interest in donating a kidney to your loved one or friend.

We would like to encourage you to ask questions and review the enclosed literature prior to starting the donor evaluation process.

The Surgery

There are two ways a kidney may be removed ("**nephrectomy**").

Laparoscopic donor nephrectomy is the **most common technique** utilized at our center. This usually limits the postoperative pain experienced by the donor and allows removal of the kidney through a few relatively small incisions. There is always a **small chance** of needing to **convert to an open donor nephrectomy** when laparoscopic surgery is undertaken. In such cases, a **larger** incision will then be made to remove the kidney.

Open Donor Nephrectomy

In some cases open donor nephrectomy will be recommended as the preferred procedure because of the donor's anatomy or other characteristics.

The Risks of Donating a Kidney

Although serious complications related to the kidney donor surgery are rare, it is important to understand that donating a kidney is a procedure that has some risk. As we go through the living donor evaluation process, we will discuss this in detail.

Serious risks:

- **Risk of death.**
- **Bleeding requiring blood transfusion.**
- **Open surgical conversion for laparoscopic cases.**

Other rare, but potentially serious complications:

- **Infection**
- **Hernia at the incision site**
- **Injury to structures near the kidney including bowel, lung, blood vessels, pancreas, liver, spleen, or adrenal glands**
- **Weakened abdominal wall if open donor nephrectomy is needed**
- **Blood clot in the leg or lungs**
- **Bowel obstruction**
- **Depending on your overall health, there is also a very small risk that you will develop problems with your remaining kidney sometime in the future**

The Costs of Donating your Kidney

The **medical costs** (this does not include hotel accommodations, travel, time lost from work, etc.) associated with your evaluation as an organ donor are **covered** by the recipient's primary insurance. However, **should a major medical condition be identified that excludes you from donating your kidney, it will be necessary to refer you back to your primary care doctor for further evaluation and treatment.** Once you are released from the donor evaluation process, the health care costs will revert to your own insurance carrier.

If you donate a kidney, you may be monitored for complications related to the surgery for a period of up to 2 years. **Routine health maintenance costs will revert to your private insurance carrier.**

If you receive any bills relating to your evaluation as an organ donor, please send them to: **Living Donor Coordinator, Abdominal Organ Transplant, Wake Forest Baptist Health, Medical Center Blvd., Winston-Salem, NC 27157.** If you have any questions, please call 855-886-6833.

The Donor Evaluation Process

The **optimal living donor** is close to their **ideal body weight**, has a **normal blood pressure without medication**, and has **no major medical illnesses**.

The **first step** in the donor evaluation is to **have your blood drawn to test for compatibility with the recipient.**

After the initial compatibility testing, **one donor candidate will be chosen to proceed with a more extensive medical evaluation which includes routine blood tests, including HIV, Hepatitis series, chest x-ray, EKG, CT Scan, consultation with the living donor coordinator and transplant social worker..**

Based on the medical history and review of the initial testing done, some donors will be asked to meet with an independent living donor advocate, nephrologist and a donor surgeon.

Recommended Follow-up Care after Donating a Kidney

All currently available long term studies show that kidney donation is safe to the donor, but most follow-up studies are only of 15 years duration. However, it is known that people with one kidney are **more susceptible to the negative health effects of smoking, obesity, and high blood pressure than those who have two kidneys.**

Overall, long term studies of donors have shown that donors do well over time, but the true lifetime risk following donation is unknown. For this reason, we recommend that people who have donated a kidney be seen by their doctor **annually, refrain from the use of any tobacco products, and maintain a normal weight.**

More information can be found on the internet at:

United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS):

www.UNOS.org

Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients:

www.ustransplant.org

National Kidney Foundation:

www.kidney.org

Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN):

www.optn.transplant.hrsa.gov

National Foundation for Transplants:

www.transplants.org

Donate Life NC:

<http://www.donatelifenc.org>

If you have any questions please call:

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