

Fact sheet

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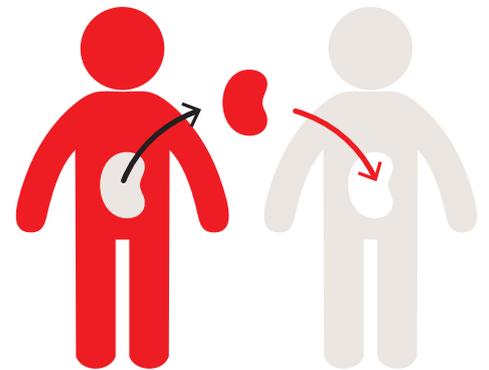
Non-directed Living Kidney Donation

Living kidney donation is where you donate one of your kidneys to a family member or friend who has end stage kidney disease (also called kidney failure). Non-directed living kidney donation is similar, but you donate a kidney to someone on the kidney transplant waiting list. In this situation you do not know the person who receives your kidney.

Being a non-directed living kidney donor is a very serious decision.

You will need to discuss this with a number of people, which may include your family, your doctor and the kidney transplant team in your local public hospital.

See the *Living Kidney Donation* and the *Deciding to be a Live Donor* fact sheets for more information if you are thinking about a living kidney donation.



Who will receive my kidney?

If you decide to be a non-directed living kidney donor, your kidney will be given to a person who needs a kidney transplant and is registered on the kidney transplant waiting list.

The kidney transplant waiting list is not just a queue where people slowly work their way to the front. Each time a donor kidney becomes available a recipient is chosen taking into account the blood group, the tissue typing and match, and the waiting time on dialysis of all the possible recipients in Australia. A computer generates a score for these and other factors, and the recipient with the highest score will be offered the kidney.

There are national guidelines for deciding who will receive a donated organ or tissue in Australia. These guidelines can be seen on the Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand website www.tsanz.com.au.

People who are waiting for a kidney transplant are on dialysis because their kidneys are not working properly. Dialysis acts as an artificial kidney by removing waste products from the blood. A kidney transplant is a treatment for kidney failure, but it is not a cure. A transplant offers the person with kidney failure a more active life, without needing dialysis. How long the transplanted kidney will work can depend on many factors. In Australia, about 40 percent of transplanted kidneys are still functioning 15 years after transplant.

Do I get to meet the person who receives my kidney?

You will not be told the name or be able to meet the person who receives your kidney. This person will be told that a 'good Samaritan' or 'altruistic' donor donated their kidney.

What are the costs involved in being a non-directed living kidney donor?

You will not have to pay for any medical/hospital expenses, as you will be a patient in a public hospital.

You may be eligible for the Support for Living Organ Donors Program. This Program provides reimbursement to your employer for up to 9 weeks of leave (based on a 38 hour week) of leave, at an amount up to the National Minimum Wage. As of 1 July 2017, reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses (even for donors who are

not employed) is also included in the Program. For more information or to register see the Department of Health page <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/leave-for-living-organ-donors> or call (02) 6289 5055.

You should also check if kidney donation affects your health insurance, income protection insurance or superannuation.

Can I be paid for my kidney?

No. It is illegal to buy and sell human organs in Australia.

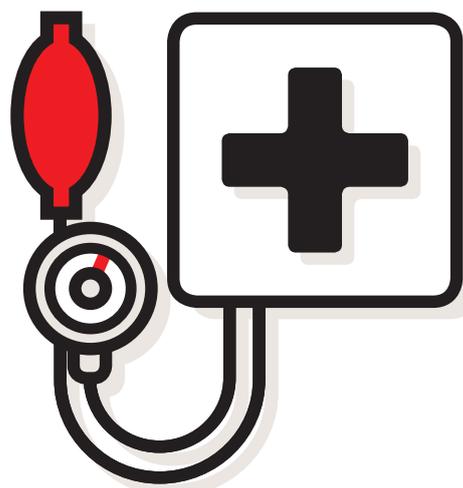
Kidney Health Australia has published a position statement, available on our website http://kidney.org.au/cms_uploads/docs/organ-trafficking-position-statement-poster-20-october-2013.pdf.

Can anyone donate a kidney?

You need to be healthy and over the age of 18 to be suitable as a non-directed living kidney donor. There are some medical conditions which may prevent you from being a kidney donor.

These include:

- Having cancer
- Having diabetes
- Having high blood pressure
- Having an infectious disease
- A history of behaviour that increases the risk of infectious diseases
- Having kidney, lung or heart disease
- Being obese
- Having a psychiatric or mental health condition
- Previous abdominal surgery



What are the risks involved with being a non-directed living kidney donor?

Being a living kidney donor means having major surgery. This always carries a risk of serious complications including death.

Complications during surgery can include:

- punctured lung
- lung infection
- nerve damage
- blood clots
- bowel perforation (small tear)
- bleeding

Living kidney donors are very healthy and carefully chosen to minimise the risk to their health.

Living donors are unlikely to develop kidney problems in the future. The removal of one kidney triggers the other kidney to increase in size and function. Your remaining kidney can provide up to 75 per cent of normal kidney function rather than the expected 50 per cent.

However, living kidney donors may be at increased risk of kidney disease if your remaining kidney is injured or a disease develops unexpectedly. There is also a small risk of increased blood pressure and protein in your urine as you get older. For more information see the *Life with a Single Kidney* fact sheet.

How do I become a non-directed living kidney donor?

If you would like to be considered as a non-directed living kidney donor the first step is to ask your doctor to refer you to your nearest hospital with a transplant unit. You will be asked to have some tests including:

- Blood and urine tests
- ECG (electrocardiogram - checks your heart)
- Chest x-ray
- Kidney ultrasound (using sound wave images to check your kidney)
- Psychiatric and a mental health assessment

You will have an education session with the Renal Transplant Nurse. If there are any concerns about your fitness for surgery or any risk factors for future kidney problems, you will not be accepted as a donor. The testing may show up a health problem you didn't know about, so you should be ready if this happens.

What are other ways of helping people?

There are other ways that you can help people in the community including:

- Being a blood donor. For more information Visit www.donateblood.com.au or call 13 14 95.
- Being a bone marrow donor. For more information visit www.abmdr.org.au or call 02 9234 2405.
- Registering on the Australian Organ Donor Register to be an organ donor after you die.

Forms can be found on the website <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-organ-donor-register> or from any Medicare office or by phoning 1800 777 203.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you would like more information about national organ and tissue donation visit the DonateLife website at www.donatelife.gov.au or contact your local DonateLife office.



THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Being a non-directed living kidney donor means donating one of your kidneys to someone that you do not know, who is on the kidney transplant waiting list.
- You may feel a sense of satisfaction in improving someone's quality of life. However, being a living kidney donor means having major surgery. This always carries a risk of serious complications including death.
- You will need to have many medical and psychological tests to make sure that being a non-directed living kidney donor is safe for you.

What does that word mean?

Dialysis - A treatment for kidney failure that removes waste products and excess fluid from the blood by filtering the blood through a special membrane.

End Stage Kidney (Renal) Disease (ESKD) - The stage of kidney disease when a person's kidneys have stopped working and treatment, such as dialysis or a transplant, is needed to sustain life. Also referred to as End Stage Kidney (Renal) Failure (ESKF), kidney failure or stage 5 CKD.

Living kidney donation - Where a living person donates one of their kidneys to be transplanted to another person, usually a family member or close friend.

Non-directed living kidney donation - Where a living person donates one of their kidneys to someone on the kidney transplant waiting list. In this situation you do not know the person who receives your kidney.

Transplant - A medical operation in which an organ or tissue is removed from the body of one person (the donor) and put it into the body of another person who is very ill (the recipient). Organs that are suitable for donation include kidneys, heart, lungs, liver, intestines and pancreas. Tissues that are suitable for donation include heart valves and tissues, bone and tendons, skin, and eye tissue.

For more information about kidney or urinary health, please contact our free call Kidney Health Information Service (KHIS) on 1800 454 363.

Or visit our website kidney.org.au to access free health literature.

This is intended as a general introduction to this topic and is not meant to substitute for your doctor's or health professional's advice. All care is taken to ensure that the information is relevant to the reader and applicable to each state in Australia. It should be noted that Kidney Health Australia recognises that each person's experience is individual and that variations do occur in treatment and management due to personal circumstances, the health professional and the state one lives in. Should you require further information always consult your doctor or health professional.



If you have a **hearing or speech impairment**, contact the National Relay Service on **1800 555 677** or relayservice.com.au

For all types of services ask for 1800 454 363