

Chapter 4: Types of Donors

Living Donors

A living donor can be any person who willingly comes forward to be evaluated for possible donation. This may be a family member, friend, or other person you know. Occasionally people get a kidney from a donor they do not know after posting on social media or getting their story out.

The potential donor will have many tests and consults to be sure they are healthy enough to donate a kidney and that donation is a safe option for them.

- In the United States, it is illegal to buy or sell kidneys. Donors must come forward willingly without financial compensation.
- Benefits of receiving a kidney from a living donor include:
 - shorter time waiting for transplant
 - the kidney usually works right away
 - the kidney usually works longer than a kidney from a deceased donor
 - ability to plan surgery
 - you may be able to avoid starting dialysis if you have not yet started.

Deceased Donors (Waiting List)

- Once you are approved as a candidate, your name will be placed on a nationwide waiting list for a kidney from a person who has recently died.
 - The average waiting time for this type of donor is 5 to 8 years.
- When a kidney is offered from a deceased donor, a transplant coordinator and surgeon will review the donor information and your current status to determine if the kidney is appropriate to transplant. If the surgeon thinks it is a good offer, a coordinator will call you any time during the day or night to discuss and give you instructions.
- It may take time for the kidney to work after transplant; this is called delayed graft function. Delayed graft function is more common with kidneys from deceased donors. During this time, you may need dialysis until the kidney is working better.

Paired Exchange Program

If you have a living donor who is not compatible with you, you and your donor can enroll in the Paired Exchange Program.

This program tries to find matches among people whose donors don't match them but might match someone else who has a living donor. If there's a match, your donor would donate to the other recipient and that person's donor would donate to you.

Your transplant coordinator can give you more information.

