Why Living Donation?

As of January 2018, there were 2,600 individuals on the waiting list for a kidney transplant in the state of Michigan and more than 95,000 in the nation, according to the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, http://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov. Due to the length of the kidney waiting list and the short supply of deceased donor organs, the waiting period for a deceased donor kidney can be several years. Therefore, having a live donor can decrease a patient’s waiting time for a kidney transplant.

Other advantages to a living donor transplant include:

• The recipient receives the transplant much sooner and can avoid years of waiting on dialysis for a transplant from a deceased donor

• Better short-term and long-term outcomes as living donor kidneys usually last longer

• Surgery is scheduled making it more convenient for patients and their families

• More complete medical testing is possible with living donors, which helps to provide the highest quality kidneys for transplant

• The recipient receives the kidney immediately after the donor surgery, which helps preserve kidney function and reduce complications
WHO IS A GOOD DONOR?

Donors do not need to be related to the recipient, although they often are related. They can be friends, coworkers, members of the same church or other organization, or any other type of relationship. While many people are willing to be living donors, not everyone has the qualities necessary to participate in living donation. Donors must be chosen carefully in order to avoid unwanted medical or psychological outcomes.

While the individual circumstances of each potential donor are considered and testing must be done to determine compatibility, all potential donors must be:

- genuinely willing to donate
- physically fit
- in good general health
- free from diabetes, cancer, kidney disease and heart disease

Individuals considered for living donation are usually between 18 and 65 years of age. Gender and race are not factors in determining a successful match. Hypertensive donors over the age of 50 may be eligible under certain conditions.
WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO DONATE A KIDNEY?

1. **Contact the Transplant Center**
   Individuals who wish to be considered to donate a kidney must contact the Living Kidney Donation program at 800-333-9013 to indicate their interest in donation; the office cannot initiate contact with potential donors until they declare their interest. Potential donors will speak with a member of the living donor team who will begin the process by asking questions that include demographic information, personal and family general health history, medications and social history.

2. **Blood Type Matching**
   Potential living donors are expected to provide documentation of their ABO blood type.

3. **Tissue Typing**
   Potential donors who are deemed to be ABO compatible and medically appropriate will need to have blood drawn for tissue typing. If the donor and recipient are not compatible either because of ABO blood type or tissue typing, they are highly encouraged to participate in our paired donation program. Alternatively, desensitization between incompatible donor-recipient pairs can sometimes be done. Compatible donor-recipient pairs can also participate in the paired donation program. Please see the KPD section on page 6 for details.

4. **Pre-Donation Evaluation**
   Potential donors identified to move forward in the process will be given an appointment in the Kidney Evaluation Clinic. During this appointment the potential donor will be assessed by a nephrologist, a transplant surgeon and a social worker. Many times all the testing can be accomplished on the day of evaluation.
Required testing for donor screening includes:

- A complete history and physical exam to evaluate for any medical issues that may make donation unwise
- Blood studies will include blood chemistries, blood counts, blood type, immune system function and tests for certain infectious diseases
- Chest X-ray
- EKG of the heart
- Additional testing may be necessary depending on individual medical history
- If on the day of evaluation a person is considered to be an excellent candidate to donate a kidney, a computerized tomography (CT) scan will be scheduled. Often this can be scheduled the same day as the evaluation
- Other testing as deemed necessary

The results of these evaluations are held confidential; not even the recipient is told about this information. The donor is free to withdraw at any time during the donation work-up and is not obligated to donate.
KIDNEY PAIRED DONATION (KPD)

Many patients in need of a kidney transplant may have individuals in their lives willing to donate a kidney, but unfortunately their friends or loved ones cannot donate because they are not a compatible match. The Kidney Paired Donation program is offered to patients who have donors that do not match their blood type or who cannot accept a kidney from a donor because there is a strong chance they would reject the kidney. The program is aimed at providing increased transplant opportunities for patients on the kidney waitlist at the University of Michigan to other pairs in the same situation. When a ‘pair’ match is found, the donor from pair 1 donates to the recipient from pair 2, and the donor from pair 2 donates to the recipient from pair 1. Even a donor and recipient pair that are compatible can participate in paired donation and help another person or persons receive a living donor transplant.

The University of Michigan participates with both the Alliance for Paired Donation and United Network for Organ Sharing Paired Kidney Exchange programs. These national programs and centers from across the United States have patients enrolled in their databases. In almost all cases the donor and recipient remain at their home transplant center and travel is not required.
Frequently Asked Questions About Paired Donation

Q. Will my donor be called upon to donate before I receive a transplant?

No. Your donor will only donate if you have either already received a transplant through the Kidney Paired Donation program or you are receiving a transplant at the same time that your donor is donating.

Q. Will I remain on the deceased donor list while being enrolled in the Kidney Paired Donation program?

Yes. All transplant eligible patients enrolled in our Kidney Paired Donation program remain on the deceased donor list.

Q. Am I able to be on multiple waiting lists while being enrolled in the Kidney Paired Donation program?

Yes. Being on more than one waiting list does not impact your status in the Kidney Paired Donation program.
Frequently Asked Questions About Paired Donation

Q. Can I have more than one donor enrolled in the program with me?

Yes. The more donors you bring into the program, the better your chances are of finding a match.

Q. Is there any cost to enroll in the program?

No. There is no cost to you or to the potential donors.

Q. Will my donor or I be required to travel to another transplant program?

In almost all cases the donor and recipient care is provided by the home Transplant Center and travel is not necessary.

Kidney Paired Donation Coordinator
800-333-9013
WHAT ARE THE RISKS FOR A LIVING DONOR?

While the risk to the donor is minimal, especially if the procedure is done laparoscopically, there are risks associated with the surgical procedure such as bleeding or infection. Research suggests that the long-term medical risks of having only one remaining kidney are low.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS TO THE DONOR?

Living donors are not responsible for the cost of their donation work-up, hospitalization or the costs of complications. These services are covered by the transplant center. Donors will be responsible for their lost wages, cost of travel to and from the hospital for pre-transplant, admission and post-transplant procedures. Most medical insurers do not reimburse for these items. The National Living Donor Assistance Program may help with travel expenses for donors who qualify based on financial need. Donors will need to complete paperwork and provide financial statements to assess the financial need for funds.

LIVING DONOR MENTOR PROGRAM

The Living Donor Mentor Program links people who have already donated an organ with those who are considering living donation. A mentor can be a valuable source of support, encouragement and information. Mentors have various backgrounds which allow potential donors to be matched to a mentor best suited to them.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Michigan Medicine — www.uofmhealth.org
U-M Transplant Center — www.uofmhealth.org/transplant
National Kidney Foundation — www.kidney.org
Gift of Life Michigan — www.giftoflifemichigan.org
THE MICHIGAN DIFFERENCE IN TRANSPLANTATION

The University of Michigan Transplant Center has been a leader in transplantation since 1964. Major advances including laparoscopic kidney-donor surgery, paired-exchange living-donor transplants, desensitization and a donor mentoring program have occurred at the U-M Transplant Center. The kidney transplant team has performed more than 6,600 kidney transplants including more than 2,800 living-donor transplants.

The University of Michigan Transplant Center is committed to cutting edge research that will benefit today’s patient and patients of the future. We are dedicated to:

- Providing outstanding multi-disciplinary and integrated clinical care through the full continuum of progressive organ failure and transplantation
- Fostering fundamental scientific discovery and innovative translational research in transplantation
- Developing future physician and scientific leaders in transplantation, and build referral base capability to manage patient populations
- Providing public policy leadership related to organ donation, progressive organ failure and disease prevention
- Offering the most comprehensive program for highly sensitized kidney transplant candidates in the state of Michigan, including kidney paired exchange, desensitization, and the combination of both.