

# Kidney Donation Fact Sheet

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# FAQs

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- **How do I know if I'm qualified to be a donor?**
  - Any normal, healthy adult with two normal kidneys can be a kidney donor. Your blood type will be the main factor determining if you are a match.
  - Tissue typing is the next factor that will be evaluated for compatibility. An additional blood test is used to determine tissue type.
  - Lastly, a process called "crossmatching" tests if your blood and the recipient's blood are a good match.
- **Who will cover the cost of the operation?**
  - You will not be billed any costs. All costs (including travel) will be billed directly to Echo and Medicare (anyone with end stage kidney failure can get Medicare but it only covers 80%).
- **How can I help support financially?**
  - Any contributions to Echo's [GoFundMe](#) is greatly appreciated. With regular dialysis and medical appointments, the cost has quickly risen and will increase astronomically with transplant surgery.
- **Where will the operation take place?**
  - The Cleveland Clinic
- **How soon is Echo looking to get the transplant?**
  - As soon as possible. The process takes time to complete the evaluation process so the earlier the better to begin the process.
- **Is the operation dangerous?**
  - Kidney donor surgery is a very safe operation. As with any surgery, there is a risk of bleeding and infection. The most advanced surgical technique, laparoscopic nephrectomy, has reduced the hospital stay to one or two days, resulted in less pain and scarring, and has reduced full recovery time from eight to 12 weeks down to two to four weeks.
- **What are the risks of having only one kidney?**
  - A person with one kidney is no more likely to get kidney disease than someone with two kidneys. Even if the most common forms of kidney disease were to occur, a person with one kidney has no major disadvantage because medical kidney disease attacks both kidneys simultaneously. After surgery, the donor's remaining kidney will increase in size and function. The donor's chance for a long, normal, and healthy life remains the same with one kidney.
- **If my blood type is not a match is there anything else I can do?**
  - Yes! The Cleveland Clinic has a Paired Donation program for donors that are not matches. The program allows you to donate a kidney to a different recipient, and in return, Echo will receive a living donor kidney from another individual.
- **Where can I learn more about this process?**
  - Visit [Cleveland Clinic's Living Kidney Donation page](#).

# 3 Things You Can Do

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1. Fill out [this contact form](#) and someone will be in touch with you to share additional information on the kidney donation process.
2. Get tested to confirm your blood type if you don't already know it. If you [donate blood to the Red Cross](#), you can find out your blood type for free. You can also get tested if you officially [sign up](#) for the donor process through the Cleveland Clinic.
3. Learn more about the process at [Cleveland Clinic's Living Kidney Donation page](#).

# Living Donor Evaluation Process

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## Can I be a kidney donor?

Generally, any normal, healthy adult with two normal kidneys can be a kidney donor. Your blood type will be the main factor in determining who can receive your kidney.

## What blood tests are performed to determine if I am a compatible kidney donor?

**ABO blood type** - First, a simple blood test is performed to determine your blood type and that of the recipient. Here's how your blood type should be compatible with the recipient's blood type:

- If you have blood type A, your recipient should have blood type A or AB.
- If you have blood type B, your recipient should have blood type B or AB.
- If you have blood type AB, your recipient must have blood type AB.
- If you have blood type O, you are a universal donor and can donate to someone of any blood type: A, B, AB, or O.

**Tissue typing** -Tissue typing is a blood test that evaluates the compatibility, or closeness, between your tissues and the recipient's. A human lymphocyte antigen (HLA) blood test is used to determine tissue type and help ensure that you're a good genetic match for the recipient. In an HLA blood test, the tissue typing lab can identify and compare information about you and your recipient's antigens (the "markers" in cells that stimulate antibody production) so they can match your kidney to the recipient.

While biological siblings (brothers and sisters) have the best chance of being a perfect match (six of six antigens), advancements in anti-rejection medicines have greatly reduced the occurrence of rejection in kidneys from unrelated donors. Researchers are also making strides in the development of treatments that will significantly increase the donor success rate when tissue doesn't closely match.

**Crossmatching** - In crossmatching, your blood and the recipient's blood are placed together in a test tube and examined to see if there is cell damage. If all your cells survive, there is a negative crossmatch, which is considered a good result. If your cells begin to die, a positive crossmatch results and gives a preview of what might happen with a transplant. In this case, it may be determined that the risk of proceeding with the transplant would be too high.

**After the blood tests, how will I be evaluated as a potential donor?** If the initial blood tests indicate you are a suitable match, and you decide you would like to proceed, we will arrange an extensive donor evaluation to ensure you are in normal physical and emotional condition, and to inform you about the risks and procedures of being a kidney donor.

The evaluation generally consists of two days of outpatient appointments and testing. The evaluation will consist of:

- Medical Evaluation
- Surgical Evaluation
- Psychosocial Evaluation
- Living Donor Education
- Financial Education
- Lab work
- EKG (electrocardiogram)
- Chest X-Ray
- 24 hour ambulatory blood pressure monitor
- CT Scan of the abdomen and pelvis

Based upon the physicians' findings during the evaluation appointments, additional testing and consults may be needed. You will also be asked to update your health maintenance testing if needed:

- Pap test for women 18 years of age and older
- Mammogram for women 40 years of age and older
- Colonoscopy for both women and men 50 years of age and older

# Cleveland Clinic Live Kidney Donor FAQ's

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**Who would be a good living donor candidate?** Biological siblings generally make the best living donors due to matching. However, With the advancements in drugs and treatment for rejection prevention, anyone can be considered a donor if they have a compatible blood type. Most healthy individuals ages 18 and over are potential donors. All living donors are evaluated individually. You should discuss donation with immediate and extended family members, friends, co-workers, and friends of friends. The success of kidney transplants using unrelated living donors is nearly as high as living related donors.

**What are the risks of having only one kidney?** A common question from a donor candidate is: "What if I get kidney disease later on in life?" A person with one kidney is no more likely to get kidney disease than someone with two kidneys. Even if the most common forms of kidney disease were to occur, a person with one kidney has no major disadvantage because medical kidney disease attacks both kidneys simultaneously. After surgery, the donor's remaining kidney will increase in size and function. The donor's chance for a long, normal, and healthy life remains the same with one kidney.

**Will the quality of life change for the donor?** Once the donor has healed from the surgery, the person should not experience a difference in energy level, ability to work, life expectancy, susceptibility to illness, sexual function, or feeling of health. Also, donation should not affect fertility. Many female kidney donors have had normal pregnancies after donation. Donors also might receive a certain amount of satisfaction knowing they were able to help save another person's life. In addition, by giving one of his or her kidneys, the living donor has also made a deceased donor kidney available to another who might not have any other options.

**Is the donor operation dangerous?** Kidney donor surgery is a very safe operation. As with any surgery, there is a risk of bleeding and infection. The most advanced surgical technique, laparoscopic nephrectomy, has reduced the hospital stay to one or two days, resulted in less pain and scarring, and has reduced full recovery time from eight to 12 weeks down to two to four weeks.

**Who will pay the donor's medical bills?** A donor candidate will undergo a complete evaluation to determine if he or she can safely donate a kidney. The recipient's insurance company will pay for these costs. All costs associated with the donor's operation and recovery will also be billed to the recipient's insurance company.

Once a donor has recovered, he or she will be required to have a follow-up appointment at six months, one year, and two years. A donor also might incur costs of travel, lodging, meals, and other non-medical expenses. Donating an organ is covered by the Federal Medical Leave Act. However, the donor candidate should determine the impact donation will have on his or her work situation before committing to the operation.

# Donation Stories

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- [Donated Kidney Saves Best Friend's Life](#)
- [Woman Donates Kidney to Best Friend](#)
- [Kidney donation 'a calling' for this donor](#)