Why living donation?

Living donor transplant is the first line treatment option for kidney failure. With living donation, patients can avoid dialysis — or shorten the time spent on it — preventing long-term interruption in lifestyle and reducing the chance for complications. More importantly, living donor transplant adds years to a person’s life compared to dialysis.

Despite the benefits of living donor transplant, patients are often their own roadblocks out of concern for the donor and hesitation in asking for help. In fact, donating a kidney is a safe procedure and thousands are performed each year. A transplant from a living donor allows an individual — family member, friend, loved one and even a stranger — to provide one of two healthy kidneys to someone in need.

It is critical for a person facing kidney failure to reflect on the gift of living kidney donation and accept the help that the people closest to you will be eager to offer.
What do potential donors need to know?

Almost anyone can become a living donor, provided they are in good health. All potential donors must undergo complete medical and psychosocial testing before being approved.

Living kidney donor surgery is safe for the donor.

Money cannot be exchanged between living donors and recipients.

The donor’s medical costs are covered.

Living donors resume their normal lives after surgery.

What if my donor is not a match?

If your donor is approved but is not a match for you, Houston Methodist has multiple innovative programs to ensure you receive a transplant, including a paired kidney donation program.

How can we save the most lives?

Everyone is encouraged to participate in paired donation, helping increase the number of lives saved.

A living donor can initiate a chain of lifesaving transplants by donating to a stranger. In turn, you receive a kidney best suited for you from another willing donor. That means at least two lives saved.

Using advanced computer software, we identify the most compatible and highest number of matches among a group of patients in need and their willing donors — from our own internal program and through participation in numerous national programs.

Where do I begin?

At Houston Methodist, we recommend a few simple steps to get you started:

Write your story. Begin with writing your journey to this point and how it has affected your life — family, career and hobbies. Include what a transplant means for your future and your return to a healthy lifestyle.

Share your story. Bring together the closest people in your life and let them know where you are in this journey of kidney disease. You can expect your situation to touch someone in the group.

Identify a champion. You don’t have to ask everyone you know in your community, church, work or social media network to give you a kidney. Think of a trustworthy, well-spoken person in your life to take up your cause and become your advocate, sharing your story and your need on your behalf.

Remember, it’s not about “the ask” — it’s about your team sharing your story.

I have a potential donor. Now what?

You are likely to have multiple loved ones volunteer to give you a kidney. Each person must visit houstonmethodistlivingdonor.org to complete an online health form.