

Finding a Donor



Getting the Word Out:

A step-by-step guide for
reaching out to potential donors

Why living donation?

Finding a living donor at an early stage of your kidney disease may allow you to avoid dialysis completely. Without a living donor, you must be on dialysis before you are placed on the transplant wait list. Waiting for a kidney transplant from a deceased donor may take many years.

Getting Ready

Approaching potential donors can seem difficult. It is common to feel a range of emotions as you begin to reach out to find someone who may be willing to be a living donor.

You may feel:

- **Uneasy** about asking and unsure of how to go about it.
- **Confused** about who can become a potential donor.
- **Disappointed** that no one has come forward or offered to donate.
- **Hesitant** to ask a potential donor in case they say no.
- **Fear** for the future health of the person who donates the kidney.
- **Concern** about the impact on the donor and their daily life.
- **Anxious** about feeling indebted to the donor and if your relationship might somehow change.

Living donation offers a good option for people needing a kidney transplant. Outcomes from living donor transplants are generally better than outcomes from deceased donor transplants.

Salimah, kidney donor



Discussing these feelings and concerns with your pre-transplant or renal social worker can help. They have worked with many patients over the years and understand the emotions and the challenges.

Knowing the facts about living kidney donation is a great way to begin and will help you feel more comfortable when approaching people.

Know the Facts:

- Donors live healthy, normal lives with one kidney.
- Donors are screened carefully to make sure they are medically okay to donate a kidney.
- The donor assessment process is confidential. Donors can gather information and be assessed before making a commitment to donate.
- Your donor must start the screening process themselves by contacting the Pre-Transplant Clinic.
- At any step in the process, a prospective donor can choose not to proceed with the donation.
- In BC there are an average of 100 living kidney donations each year.
- If your donor is not a match, you may be able to participate in a national paired exchange with other non-matching donor and recipient pairs.
- The Living Donor Expense Reimbursement Program (LODERP) can help donors with some of the costs related to assessment and donation, including time away from work.

You may also want to read the “Living Donor” brochure for a step-by-step guide through the living donor process. Ask for a copy at the transplant centre or read it online at www.transplant.bc.ca.

The next step is getting the word out to potential organ donors.

Who to Approach

Donors can be family, friends, work colleagues and acquaintances. Many donors have said that deciding to donate was an automatic “yes” and was something they wanted to do as soon as they learned of the need. Living kidney donors feel honoured to give the gift of life to someone they care about.

How to Get the Word Out

Once you are comfortable talking with people about living donation, you can start to reach out. Think of it like a ripple in the water as you share your story and ask others to share it with people in their circle. The more people who know of your need, the greater your chance of finding a donor.





Here are some ideas other recipients have used to help talk about their need:

- Write a letter or email about your medical situation and send it to family and friends. Your social worker can provide a sample letter to use as a guide.
- Use social media tools such as Facebook, blogs, and email to regularly update people. A friend of a friend may know someone who has been touched by kidney disease and may want to donate.
- Ask a family member or friend to be your spokesperson. For example, appointing a spouse to provide information to others has led to successful outcomes in the past.
- Encourage your personal support people to attend your medical appointments with you so they can discuss living donation with your medical team.
- Link with your local Kidney Foundation branch. They can put you in touch with other kidney patients who know what you are going through, and can provide education and support.

Remember:

In Canada it is illegal to buy or sell organs. Donors must come forward freely and without pressure. Soliciting donors through advertisements and online ad listings is not recommended.

Success - A donor comes forward

If you have a prospective donor, or know someone who wants more information before making a decision, invite them to contact the Pre-Transplant Clinic at one of the transplant centres listed on page 5. The pre-transplant team will provide them with information and guide them through the process.

Need more information?

St. Paul's Hospital Living Donor Program

Unit 6A, 6th Floor, Providence Building
1081 Burrard St.

Vancouver, BC V6Z 1Y6

Phone: 604-806-9027

Fax: 604-806-9658

Toll Free: 1-877-922-9822

donornurse@providencehealth.bc.ca

recipientnurse@providencehealth.bc.ca

www.providencehealthcare.org

Vancouver General Hospital Living Donor Program

5th Floor, Gordon and Leslie Diamond Health Care Centre
2775 Laurel St.

Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9

Phone: 604-875-5182

Fax: 604-875-5236

Toll Free: 1-855-875-5182

www.vch.ca

BC Children's Hospital Renal Transplant Program

K4-172

4480 Oak St.

Vancouver, BC V6H 3V4

Phone: 604-875-3613

Fax: 604-875-2943

Other Resources

BC Transplant

Phone: 604-877-2240

Toll Free: 1-800-663-6189

www.transplant.bc.ca

Kidney Foundation of Canada, BC Branch

Phone: 604-736-9775

Toll Free: 1-800-567-8112

www.kidney.bc.ca

Other brochures you may find useful:

The Kidney Transplant Process:
A step-by-step guide for kidney transplant recipients



The Living Donor Kidney Transplant Process:
A step-by-step guide for living kidney donors



**BC
TRANSPLANT**
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Suite 350, West Tower
555 West 12th Ave.
Vancouver, BC
V5Z 3X7

Phone: 604-877-2240
Toll Free: 1-800-663-6189
Fax: 604-877-2111
Web: transplant.bc.ca

 facebook.com/BCTransplant
 [@bc_transplant](https://twitter.com/bc_transplant)

BC Transplant BC Renal Agency

PARTNERSHIP

This brochure was produced with support from the BC Renal Agency.
www.bcrenalagency.ca