

Why Donate

You may know a patient at UCSF who has advanced and permanent kidney disease. This patient's doctors have decided that the best treatment option for him or her is to receive a kidney transplant.

You cannot receive any payment in exchange for being a donor. It is illegal in the United States for a potential living kidney donor to sell his or her kidney. You cannot be forced to be a donor, or forced to be evaluated as a possible living kidney donor.

THE EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The evaluation process for a possible kidney donor involves **four steps**:

Step One: Health Questionnaire

Completing a questionnaire about your health—simple questions about past or present medical problems, medications that you are taking (if any), and health habits which will help the transplant team determine if you might be a good candidate for donation.

Step Two: Compatibility

Blood testing to determine if your kidney is a good (compatible) match with the potential recipient

Step Three: Laboratory and Transplant-Specific Diagnostic Testing

Several laboratory and transplant-specific diagnostic tests will be performed in order to continue the evaluation process. These will include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Blood samples** that may be used to screen for medical diseases as well as infections such as the Hepatitis B and C viruses and the HIV virus.
- **Blood and urine samples** determine normal kidney function
- **Electrocardiogram (EKG)**
- **Chest x-ray**
- **Exercise stress test** (depending on age and past medical history)
- **Echocardiogram** (depending on age and past medical history)

Step Four: Physical Examination & Further Transplant-Specific Diagnostic Tests

This step of the evaluation will include an appointment to meet with the medical team, and to have an x-ray of your kidneys (a CT Angiogram).

Independent Living Donor Advocate and Psychosocial Evaluation

The UCSF Kidney Transplant Program has an Independent Living Donor Advocate whose primary responsibility is to protect and promote your interests as a living donor. The advocate will respect your decision of whether or not to donate. They will make sure that you are fully informed and ensure that the decision to donate is 100% your choice.

Suitability for Donation

The kidney transplant team will decide whether you can donate or not. Your suitability is determined by current health condition, past medical history, psychosocial history, laboratory results, diagnostic data and financial status. At all times, your health and safety will be the primary focus.

Financial Responsibilities

There could be expenses during the evaluation process leading up to the surgery and during recovery after the surgery, such as travel, housing, child care and lost wages. The recipient's insurance typically covers your care and medical expenses for a limited time after donation. After surgery, insurance companies may not want to cover complications related to this surgery. You would be responsible for the cost of treatment that the insurance does not cover. Future insurance premiums may be higher due to this donation. You also may not be able to get health, disability, and life insurance in the future if you lose your current insurance or if you are not now insured.

THE SURGICAL PROCEDURE

Surgery – What to Expect

The surgery that you will have is called a nephrectomy (the surgical removal of one of your kidneys). A nephrectomy is a form of abdominal surgery (the abdomen is the part of the body that contains all of the structures between the chest and the pelvis). The surgical procedure will be done under general anesthesia. It will most likely be done through small keyhole type incisions using special instruments and a camera on a long scope (laparoscope).

Right to Opt out of Donation

You are free to decide for any reason, at any time during the evaluation process, or prior to surgery, that you no longer wish to become a donor. All information will be protected and kept confidential.

Additional Information

- Living kidney donor transplants from www.unos.org.
- National and Transplant Center-Specific Outcomes are found within the Scientific Registry for Transplant Recipients (SRTR) www.ustransplant.org
- Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) www.optn.org