

# UCLA Health

## Kidney & Pancreas Transplant Programs

### Suggestions for Finding a Living Donor

**Many potential transplant recipients are encouraged to find a living donor** to achieve transplant sooner than waiting years for a deceased donor transplant. Some recipients have family, friends, neighbors or co-workers who volunteer as living donors. Others are hesitant to let friends and loved ones know of their need for transplant, or perhaps do not know how to begin the conversation to ask someone to consider donation.

**There are programs offering tips** about how to speak with family and friends about kidney donation. We encourage you to review them, and include links to several helpful sites about kidney donation:

[https://www.kidney.org/sites/default/files/babg\\_flyer\\_english-1TM.pdf](https://www.kidney.org/sites/default/files/babg_flyer_english-1TM.pdf)

<https://exploretransplant.org/>

<https://transplantliving.org/living-donation/discussing/>

<https://www.uclahealth.org/transplants/kidney/how-to-become-a-kidney-donor>

**Be prepared to provide limited personal information to those who apply as donors for you.** Potential donors will apply online at: [www.UCLAKidneyDonor.org](http://www.UCLAKidneyDonor.org), and would need the following information about you so their application can be linked with the correct recipient:

- Recipient's name
- Recipient's date of birth

No additional recipient information is required (such as Social Security Number, address, etc.). If a potential donor requests such information, do not provide it.

**Share your story, and remember that your story may be shared with people you don't know.** Most who respond are inspired to help others, but some may not be healthy enough to donate. Others who are interested in donation may need to start a healthier diet and exercise. The following may help you and your potential donors understand if donation may be appropriate for them.

#### Things to consider when posting your request for a donor on social media

- Consider asking a loved one to be your "Champion" or Advocate, to help with potential donors' messages and field questions on your behalf.
- Those over age 25 are encouraged to apply as primary donors.
- Those younger than age 25 may be deferred out of concern for their long-term health, especially with a strong family history of diabetes, hypertension, or kidney disease.
- Donors who are incompatible can still help you achieve transplant through our Paired Exchange program. International donors may be an exception, depending on the individual situation.
- Potential donors accepted for further evaluation should expect a comprehensive assessment for which they will receive education and guidance with each step.
- A potential donor's approval or denial as a donor candidate will be decided through careful review by the UCLA Living Donor Multidisciplinary Team.
- Standard evaluation and testing for kidney donors is paid for by a fund through Medicare and will not be charged to the potential donor. Cancer screening is covered by the donor's health insurance.
- Donor's surgery and hospital admission will be billed to the recipient's insurance.
- Donors should not ask recipients for money, payment for bills, etc. Payment for donation is illegal.
- Donors will need a caregiver for transportation and light assistance for about 2-3 weeks after surgery.

- If eligible, donors may file for disability at the time of donation surgery. Most donors are able to return to work within 2-4 weeks, depending on their job duties and recovery status.
- Be cautious if donors apply from outside the United States, unless they are your close relative. Some assistance programs do not apply to international donors, and there can be challenges and cost to obtaining visas and passports. It can be expensive for a potential donor to obtain screening medical tests in their home country and then travel to the U.S. for evaluation and surgery, and like all potential donors, there is no guarantee the international donor will be approved to proceed with donation.

**Certain health conditions will decline a donor's application** at UCLA, because these conditions may directly affect their own kidney health or create a risk to you as the recipient:

- Active cancer, history of breast cancer, or melanoma
- Diabetes
- Obesity: Body Mass Index (BMI) of >32 if age 45 or younger, or >35 if older than 45. BMI will be calculated automatically on the application, but some may wish to calculate their own BMI at [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose\\_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm)
- Diabetes or hypertension during pregnancy within the past 10 years (females)
- Hypertension diagnosed before age 40
- Multiple kidney stones or multiple occurrences of kidney stones (two times or more)
- Certain autoimmune diseases such as Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)
- Current drug use
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Daily use of Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), such as for chronic pain
- History of Stroke or Blood Clots (Deep Vein Thrombosis, Pulmonary Embolism)
- Cardiac stents or bypass grafting

**Other health conditions may rule out a potential donor**, and will requires further review:

- Psychiatric History
- Cancer History
- Frequent use of NSAIDs (Ibuprofen, Naproxen, etc.)
- Pre-Diabetes (elevated blood sugar or hemoglobin A1c) or family history of diabetes
- Hypertension requiring 2 or more blood pressure medications
- Significant history of substance abuse or current excessive alcohol intake (more than 2 drinks/day)
- Childbirth within 1 year – consider applying 1 year after delivery and when no longer breastfeeding

**Donors should plan to provide** the following medical records if available:

- Recent physical exam by healthcare provider including weight, blood pressure, and medication list
- Blood Type
- Lab results within 1 year – Complete Metabolic Panel, Complete Blood Count, Urinalysis
- Pap smear within 3-5 years (females)
- Mammogram within 1-2 years – for women over 40, or family history of breast cancer
- Colonoscopy within 5-10 years – for donors over 50
  - If no colonoscopy, fecal stool card (FOBT/FIT test) within 1 year
  - Colonoscopy required for abnormal FOTB/FIT results, or colon cancer in family
- International donors must provide the above exam results to be considered as potential donors

For additional questions, please call our office at 310-825-6836 and ask to speak with your coordinator or someone on the Living Donor team. We are here to help you on your journey through kidney transplant!