

UW HEALTH TRANSPLANT CENTER

How to Find a Living Kidney Donor



Asking Someone to be a Living Donor

More than 50 percent of the people who are waiting for a kidney transplant never ask anyone to donate. These people may think that they don't have enough information about living donation, or they may feel too mentally and physically exhausted. These tools, and the support of family and friends, will make it easier to communicate the need for a living kidney donor.



"I couldn't imagine not having my friend here."

– Julie, living donor to Bill

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uwhealth.org/livingdonor

They would offer if they wanted to donate.

She must not want my kidney. She hasn't even asked me.

The Importance of Clear Communication

It's easy to assume that if people wanted to help they would just offer to donate a kidney. In fact, they may be waiting to be asked or might think someone else is already going to donate. Some people might want to do some reading about living kidney donation and others may not even know that living kidney donation is an option.

It is important to clearly state that a living kidney donor is needed.

I would be honored if you would consider being tested and possibly donating.

I had no idea I could help. How do I learn more?

Find Someone to Help

We encourage patients to quickly tell close family and friends that a living donor kidney transplant is their best option. Some patients also have a living donor champion- a person or people who help get the message out further. We give them living donor education materials to increase their chances of finding a living donor.

Share the Story

Patients and living donor champions should let people know why a living donor transplant is needed.

1. Explain the cause of the patient's kidney disease, and why their doctor recommends a kidney transplant.
2. State why living donation is the best option. Read our ***Introduction to Living Donation*** flier to learn important facts.
3. Highlight that a living donor does not have to be related to the recipient or have the same blood type. Our ***Living Kidney Donation Options*** flier explains the ways anyone who is healthy enough to donate, can donate.

There are many ways to share the story

Speak in person*

Send an email*

Write a letter*

Telephone

Church, social club or organization's bulletin or newsletter*

Ask businesses to post your story flier*

Place an ad or article in the newspaper

Local news story

Make a video

Post on social media*

Write it on your car windshield

Place a radio ad

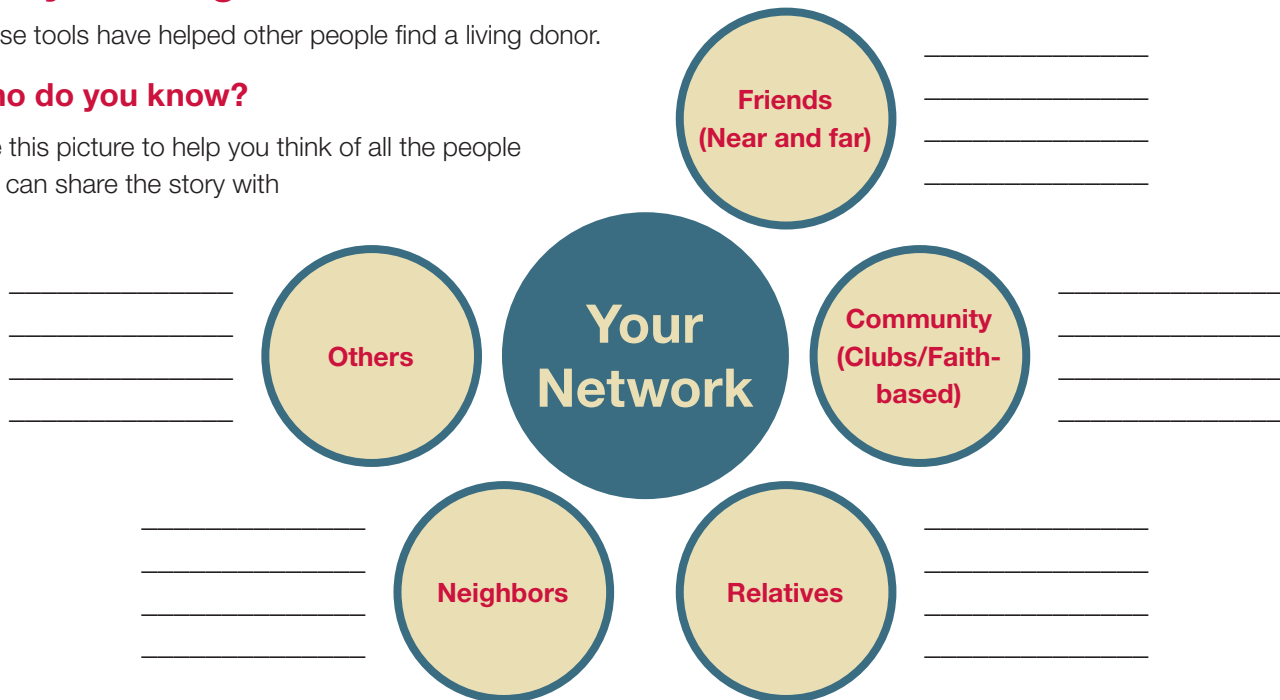
**use our examples and templates!*

Story Sharing Tools

These tools have helped other people find a living donor.

Who do you know?

Use this picture to help you think of all the people you can share the story with



Talk about it

1. Share the latest facts about the patient's situation and be very clear about what they are experiencing. Here are some suggestions for the patient to use to start this conversation, which can be easily changed for use by a living donor champion:

"I need to talk to you about something very personal."

"My kidneys are failing, and my doctor told me I need a kidney transplant as soon as possible."

"The transplant team told me I could be waiting several years for a deceased donor kidney."

"Three times a week, I have to get dialysis, which means I can't do X activity or work like I used to."

2. Introduce living donation:

"My doctor said my best option is to find someone who is willing to donate their kidney."

"A living kidney donor would prolong my life."

"The transplant team at UW Health does more than 100 living donation surgeries every year."

"They have living donation nurse coordinators who can answer questions."

3. Ask them to consider donation:

"Asking for a kidney donation is really difficult. I never thought I would be coming to you with this."

"I don't know if living donation is something you would consider, but here's a card that will tell you how you can learn more."

"This may not be an option for you, but thank you for learning more about it."

"Whatever your decision, I won't be offended or hurt. I value our relationship and no matter what that will never change."

"If you want to learn more, the UW Health website has great information. It's at uwhealth.org/livingdonor."

"I'll understand if this isn't right for you, but would you help me talk with people about this?"

Say it in writing

Important information to include:

- The patient's story, explaining the situation
- Information about living donation
- Always include the link to our online living donor inquiry form (uwhealth.org/CanIBeADonor) which is the best way for us to quickly help these people. People who do not have access to a computer may call (608) 263-1384 for help completing the form over the phone.

Sample letter (Adapt if being sent by a living donor champion)

I am writing to share an update on my health, and to ask for your support and help. I have kidney disease. (you can put in more information about your health here, as you like.)

To survive, I will either have to start dialysis treatments and/or get a kidney transplant. Dialysis treats my kidney disease by cleaning my blood. I would have to go to the dialysis center for about four hours, three times a week, for these treatments. Dialysis can be really hard on people, physically and emotionally. A kidney transplant can come from someone who has died (a deceased donor) or from a healthy living donor. To receive a deceased donor, I would get added to the transplant wait list. The average waiting time is 3-5 years. A living donor can be a family member, friend, or anyone who is healthy and volunteers to donate. They do not have to have my same blood type. My doctors at UW Health said the best option for me is a kidney transplant from a living kidney donor. A transplant from a living donor can last twice as long and the transplant can happen sooner, sometimes in a few months. This would spare me years of dialysis, and help me get back to my normal activities much faster. (You can place the link to your 'caring connection' or 'lotsa helping hands' site here. Or, you can add more information about how you are feeling, and what you are hoping to get back to doing after transplant.) I hope that you will consider being a living kidney donor for me.

Living kidney donors:

- *must be healthy people who volunteer to donate*
- *go through a thorough medical evaluation, including education about risks/benefits*
- *can change their minds any time, no questions asked*
- *are generally back to normal activities 4-6 weeks after the surgery*
- *are covered by my insurance for all costs related to the donation*

To learn more, you can read the information at: uwhealth.org/livingdonor. If you want to speak with my living donation champion (name) please call/email (add their contact info here).

If you would like to be reviewed as a potential living donor, you can complete the form at: uwhealth.org/CanIBeADonor. If you don't have access to a computer, call (608) 263-1384 and someone will help you complete the form over the phone.

I never thought I would be asking for this type of help. Please know that I will respect your decision.

Social Media/Advertising

Social media is a fast and easy way to tell people that someone needs a living donor, and lets your social media contacts share that fact with other people outside your immediate social circle.

Research suggests that these are important things to do when using social media to find a living donor:

1. Share the patient's personal information, including age, location, photograph and the cause of their kidney disease. Help people understand how much they want to be healthy, and that a living donor will save their life. Keep it short.
2. Include the way they can take the next step. (uwhealth.org/CanIBeADonor)
3. To expand how many people will see the posts, ask others to share it on their own page, and to "Like" your posts.
4. **Do not** include your personal contact information, or the names/contact information of the transplant team.
5. Avoid giving any impression that you are asking for money, and/or share any fundraising information.

Facebook: If you don't have an existing page, or wish to keep that private, start by creating a new Facebook page (or ask your living donor champion to do this).

Sample Facebook post

(Adapt if being sent by a living donor champion)



Sample bulletin/newsletter insertion

Living Kidney Donor Needed!

Our friend (your name) recently learned that they need a kidney transplant, and that a kidney from a living donor is their best chance of survival. If you are healthy, over age 18 and willing to donate a kidney, please complete the form at uwhealth.org/CanIBeADonor. If you wish to learn more about living donation, go to uwhealth.org/livingdonor. If you wish to speak to (champion's name), (your name) living donor champion, please call (champion's number) or email (champion's email).

Wallet Cards

Carry a supply of our wallet-sized cards to give to people who want to learn more about living donation. Cards are available in the transplant clinic.



What's Next?

People who are interested in learning more about being a living kidney donor may want more information about the process. Give them any of our living kidney donation materials, or point them to our website at uwhealth.org/livingdonor.

From the first step, to donation surgery, to follow up care, our living donation team will take excellent care of these generous people.

To apply to be considered for living donation, please complete our form at uwhealth.org/CanIBeADonor

No computer? Call us at (608) 263-1384

Lindsey learned through Facebook that Jackson needed a kidney.