

Living Donor

A Social Media Toolkit for Champions

A journey you don't make alone.



UPMC
LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE





About This Toolkit

Finding a living donor is a journey. And it's much more than the advancements in medicine that have made this lifesaving procedure possible. It's the compassion of people who are willing to share their life to save those in need.

This booklet will act as your guide to understanding living-donor transplants. Not only does it cover how the process works, it takes a close look at the role of an often overlooked, but highly important participant of this lifesaving excursion — the Champion.

You, as Champion, will learn:

- The challenge in front of you.
- The resources at your disposal, particularly social media.
- The basics surrounding the procedures.
- How to answer a few questions you may be asked.



Kennedy and Mike's Story

What would you do for a loved one who's in need of an organ transplant? How far would you go? For one mother, the answer was simple.

You see, Kennedy, a sick little girl with a rare genetic disease, needed a lifesaving liver transplant. Donya, her mother, who was unable to give Kennedy part of her liver, needed to find a living donor. Desperate to save her daughter's life, it was at that moment that Donya became more than Kennedy's mom; she became her Champion. And in this new role, she reached out to find a living donor.

Enter Mike, who was not only an old high-school acquaintance and Facebook friend, but also a firefighter with an instinct to help others. He jumped at the chance to help by donating part of his liver to Kennedy.

After a successful transplant, Mike was back to his active life and demanding work in only three months. And as for Kennedy, she continues to grow stronger and develop every day, giving her an opportunity to live a healthy and happy life.



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Section 1

The Challenge:
Why You're On This Journey



“People are always looking for the miracles, but what if we are the miracles?”

Courtney Bost
Living donor for her husband



The Champion

Simply put, when a loved one is waiting for a transplant, his or her life hangs in the balance; and the road to recovery may be difficult. And while there will be many who will be critical to this particular person's survival, it is you, the Champion, who will take on perhaps the most crucial role of all. But don't worry. With the help of this guide, it'll become much more manageable.

Why is the Champion so vital? The Champion provides emotional support for the person in need throughout the entire journey and takes the lead at finding and securing a suitable living donor. This is important because:

- Without a donor, the patient is unable to receive a transplant in a timely manner and his or her health will continue to deteriorate.
- The person in need of a transplant is often too sick — and in the case of a child, too young — to take on this huge task and must concentrate on staying as healthy as possible.

Your task as the Champion will be to spread the word as far as you can and to reach as many eyes, ears, and, above all, hearts as possible. You'll do this in many ways — from word-of-mouth to social media, and everything in between. The more people hear about your loved one in need, the sooner a suitable donor can be found. And the sooner a living-donor transplant takes place, the better it is for him or her.

To accomplish all of this, you'll need to fully understand the situation of the person needing the transplant. You'll also need to use as many channels as possible to deliver your message. We will get into which specific ones in the next section.

It will also require you to keep an open mind, as an offer from a potential donor could come when you least expect it. On the other hand, you may also need to be patient, as a potential donor might not immediately come forward. In other words, being a Champion for someone in need is a challenge. So you should be prepared to fully commit yourself to this journey. However, doing so could have a profoundly positive impact not only on the life you're helping to save, but on yours as well.

This is an emotionally taxing time for the person in need, which may lead to a feeling that he or she is being too much of a burden on everyone. As the Champion, it's important for you to reassure your loved one that it's a challenge worth overcoming.

Asking someone to be a living donor is a highly emotional request for both the person in need and the donor. For someone waiting for a lifesaving transplant, concerns might include stress or guilt about relying on others to help with the illness, the medical risks associated with it, or how he or she will feel if a potential donor doesn't follow through with the screening process. Other concerns might involve the possible rejection of the organ, how to possibly thank someone for being a living donor, or if there will be any impact on the relationship with the donor.

With that in mind, it might help if you shift your thinking when making your appeal. In other words, don't simply ask someone to donate an organ. Rather, present the situation and offer up the option of living donation. A good place to start is by educating yourself on the processes and procedures that are involved, which you will learn about more in Section 3. That's because having that knowledge, as well as the answers to the questions that others might have, will help instill confidence when talking to others about becoming a living donor.

You'll need to be mindful of everyone who is on this living-donation journey. They would include:

- The person waiting for a transplant
- The donor
- The caregiver (if he or she is someone other than you)
- Champion Partners (family, friends, and others who volunteer their time and effort in helping you)
- The Living-Donor Transplant Team



John and Cathy's Story

Best friends for more than 50 years, John and Cathy have always been there for each other. That friendship culminated in 2014 when John needed a kidney transplant and Cathy wanted to help. Today, their bond is stronger than ever. As for John, he is focusing on giving back to those who helped him along the way by spreading awareness of living donation and raising funds to support transplant research.



Section 2

Champions Corner:
A Collection of Resources



“This was the biggest network of people I knew, and I had to do it.”

Donya McCoy

Champion for her daughter, Kennedy Stevenson,
about why she used Facebook to find a donor



Before You Begin

A good place to start is by making sure you've assembled all of the information you will need to share in order to find a living donor. This would include:

- The person's story and why he or she needs help.
- His or her blood type.
- General facts and information about living donation.
- Photos of the person in need. Showing your loved one in a healthier state is a more positive way to convey why you're doing this. Let people know that it is not too late to help.
- A reliable contact list. Start with the people closest to the person in need. Also include a point person from the transplant center to handle any questions you might have throughout this journey.

As we said in the previous section, to be an effective Champion, you'll need to use as many channels as possible. These are the essential tools that can help you spread the word about your loved one's need further and more efficiently. This would include:

- Social Media
- Digital Resources
- Non-Digital Resources
- The Living-Donor Transplant Team

Chances are the living donor will come from someone who is familiar to you and your loved one rather than from someone who isn't.

Social Media

While social media has long been a tool for sharing pictures or personal stories, it is also a growing resource for finding the help people need for some of life's heavier issues. The most popular and effective social media platform with regard to this type of request is Facebook. We'll take a look at how that site can help you the most in your role as the Champion.

If you already have a personal Facebook profile, you can start by visiting the UPMC & Donate Life: Living-Donor Transplant Facebook page. Here, you can learn more about what living donation means and connect with others who have gone through, or are currently going through, the same situation as you and your loved one.

For those of you already familiar with Facebook, skip ahead to our Posting Pointers on page 13. Look for this location icon.



When it comes to your contact list, start with those that are close to the person needing a transplant — this may take a little digging and research.

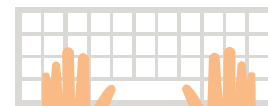
Creating a Facebook Page

If you don't have a personal Facebook profile, you'll need to set one up. Don't worry, it's simple and free of charge.



1. Go to www.facebook.com.
2. If you see the sign up form, fill out your name, your email address or phone number, a password that you've created and will be able to remember, your birthday, and your gender. If you don't see the form, click **Sign Up**, then fill out the form.
3. Click **Sign Up**.

Once you sign up, you'll need to confirm your email address or phone number. Facebook will then send you either an email or a text message to help you confirm your account. After your page is set up, you can begin requesting friends. We strongly suggest you start with, and keep to, family and friends you know and trust.



Creating a Group Page

Perhaps you don't want to use your personal Facebook page in your search for a donor. You can create a group Facebook page specifically for that purpose. Again, it's fairly simple and free of charge. Here's what you do:

1. Click the down arrow in the top right of Facebook and select **Create Group**.
2. Fill in your group name, those you want to add to your group, and then choose the privacy setting for your group.
3. Click **Create**.

Making the Group Page Easy to Remember

Once you've created a Facebook group page you can develop an easy-to-remember web address. To create a customized web address for a group that you manage:

1. Go to your group and click the elipses (...) in the top right corner and then select **Edit Group Settings**.
2. Next to **Web and Email Address**, click **Customize Address**.
3. Enter an address for your group. The address can't have special characters and can only include letters, numbers and a period (ex. SavePaul@_____.com).
4. Click **Customize Address**. (This will also create a customized email address that matches the web address.)
5. If the address you chose is available, it'll become your web and group email. If it's taken, you can choose a different address.

Please note: Once you customize your web and email address, you won't be able to change it.

Facebook remains a great way to get your message out to your connections, as well as the connections of your connections. According to the Pew Research Center, the average Facebook user has 130 "friends". (Feb. 3, 2014)



Kathy and Jeremy's Story

As mother and son, Kathy and Jeremy have always been close. So after they learned she would need a liver transplant, he didn't think twice. Luckily, he was a perfect match. A few months later, Kathy saw Jeremy get married and even danced with him at the wedding. Today, the two have recovered from their living-donor transplants and are doing well. Both also believe that more people need to be aware of living-donor transplants.

Posting Pointers

The most important things to remember when posting is to keep people emotionally invested. So, whether you're talking about an initial appeal or any updates, which you'll find help for writing both on the following page, be sure to create the content in your own style, always stay positive, and use these simple tips and tools when documenting this journey to help sustain interest in your story. And you might just turn your followers into Champion Partners.

Posting Suggestions



Photos — Whether they're of fond memories or recent progress, people love them.



Videos — More movement than photos - and possibly more moving.



Shares & Likes — "Share" or "like" someone else's story of a loved one in need and there's a good chance they'll do the same with yours. Also, don't be afraid to take the initiative and encourage people, in a friendly way, to like your page or share your posts.



Responses — Show your appreciation to those who are participating to whatever extent in helping you to find a donor.



Acknowledgements — Let others know how individuals have been there for you, no matter how large or small the deed.



Motivational Posts — Keep everybody's spirits up, including yours.

Facebook Help Center

If you still have any questions or concerns that this toolkit doesn't cover regarding Facebook, the site has a comprehensive Help Center that covers most issues. Just go to the "down arrow" button on the right-hand side of the toolbar on your page, click on it, and scroll down to "Help". From there, search for answers to questions or scroll down to "Visit the Help Center".



Personal Experiences — Share stories about what your loved one is doing beyond this challenge (vacations, good days, etc.) to show that there is so much more life to live.



Tags — Tell your story to more than just your friends. Tell it to your friends' friends.



Livestream — Talk to others and answer their questions (almost) face-to-face.



Hashtags — Create catalogues of this challenge so folks can easily find out what's going on.

How Often and How Long



2 to 3 posts per week — Less than that and people might lose interest. More than that and they may feel overwhelmed. Find your own rhythm.

250
↓
80

Keep it short — A post below 250 characters is great. A post below 80 characters is even better.

Note: Don't feel like you need to use all of these. You can just stick to those with which you are most familiar.

Getting Started

Now that you've set up your Facebook page and know some of the tools that are there to help you, it's time to make your first post. This is when you'll make your initial appeal. Here are few tips for crafting one, as well as an example to help inspire you.

If you're new to Facebook, keep in mind that the more you use it, the more comfortable you'll be with it. In other words, be patient with your own learning curve.

Whether you make this appeal through social media or in person, it should follow this particular outline, again, in your own style.

AN OPENING:	Convey your desire to start an important conversation, and include the reassurance to the potential donor that he or she will not have to make any decision as a result of it.
THE WHO:	Explain for whom you're making this request.
THE WHAT:	Provide a brief summary of the medical condition that is requiring this transplant surgery.
THE WHY:	Offer the reason why a transplant surgery is necessary.
THE WHEN:	Include a sense of urgency as well as how much time a living donor might need to invest.
A CLOSE:	Ask the potential donor to take the time to think about it, and if he or she is interested in helping, offer ways to contact you for more information.

"Initial Appeal" Post


Group Name


Okay, here goes - a life-changing request if ever there was any. You all know my dad, Paul. You may also know he has been very sick with liver cancer. Well, we just found out that he will need a liver transplant. This was tough to hear but he is hopeful and determined to beat this. We know it's a lot to ask, but would anyone be interested in learning more about being his living donor? Simply put, we need someone soon who is a match and is willing to donate a piece of his or her liver in order to save his life. Please send me a private message if you would like to talk more or would be interested in helping.

Like Comment Share

Additional Sample Posts

“Update” Post





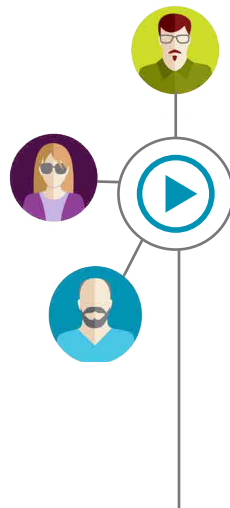
Group Name


Hi everyone! Thank you for all the love and support. It certainly means a lot to our family. My dad is headed back to the hospital for some more tests but his spirits are up. The search is still on for his living donor. A few people have been tested but we have not found a match yet. Please reach out if you want to learn more and possibly help.

Like Comment Share



“Life Event” Post






Group Name

We celebrated dad’s 64th today. A great time was had by all. He’s still in great spirits as the search for a living donor continues. He’s even started talking about where to hold his 65th. Let’s find someone to help make it happen. Now THAT would be the ultimate birthday gift.

Like Comment Share



“Found a Donor” Post





Group Name

A match has been found! Thank you all so much for your help over the past few months. We are so excited. We are in the process of scheduling his surgery and will let everyone know how it goes.

Like Comment Share



Other Social Media Outlets

Other social media platforms include YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and Google+, but Facebook remains by far the most popular among all of them, particularly with the 18 to 54 age group, which is within the ideal age range for donors.

Recommendations for Security

Regardless of which social media platform you choose, remember that this is going out on the Internet where anyone can see it. So it's important to be selective as to what you share. Here are some of the things you should avoid posting when using social media:

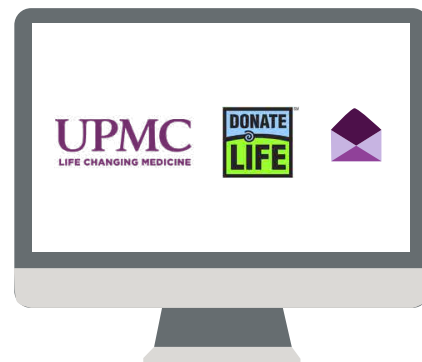
- Personal phone numbers
- Residential addresses
- Personal email addresses
- Family information
- Any other information that might be considered sensitive
- Inappropriate photos



Digital Resources

While social media is an effective tool for finding information and getting the word out, it's not the only one you have. There are others inside the digital world that can help. These would include:

- UPMC and Donate Life: Living-Donor Transplant Facebook page
- UPMC.com/LivingDonor
- The Donate Life America website, DonateLife.net
- The Center for Organ Recovery & Education (CORE) website, CORE.org
- Email – This can help spread the word through specific people you know. Addressing people through email is a way to guarantee that they'll at least know about your loved one's need.



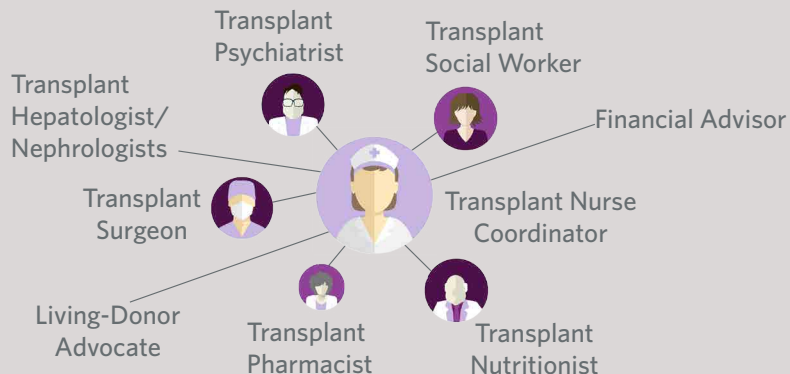
An additional benefit to using email is that you can create a specific address that directly relates to this journey (example: SavePaul@_____.com). This can be beneficial in a few ways:

- It helps to keep your personal email account more private. So if you wanted to share the ways in which to contact you, such as your phone number or your home or business address, this would be a more appropriate place to do so.
- It makes the process more manageable for you by not clogging up your personal or business email inbox.
- It can act as an avenue to and from Facebook.
- It's eye catching and easier for people to remember.
- It creates an "official" appearance.

Non-Digital Resources

Resources outside the digital world would include:

The Living-Donor Transplant Team



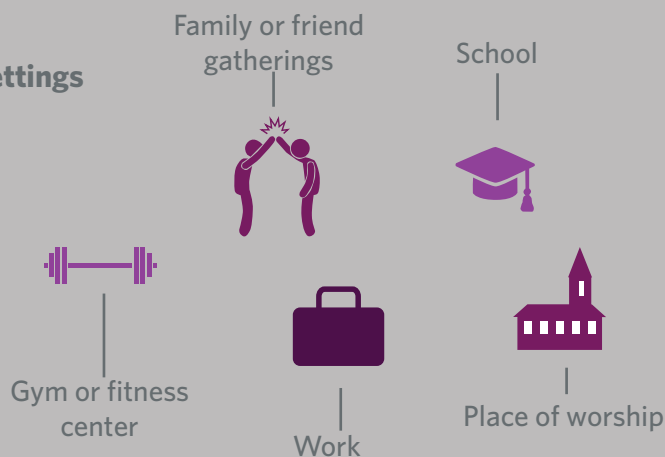
Word-of-mouth

Whether it's the occasional phone call with a family member or friend, or it's the bumping into of someone familiar at the grocery store, any time spent with someone is another opportunity to further the journey to find a suitable donor.

Social groups and organizations

Regular gatherings, such as book clubs, recreational sports leagues, church groups, alumni groups, etc., keep those with whom you share a common connection informed and up-to-date on what is happening with the person in need of the living transplant.

Social settings



Non-digital mediums



- Local traditional media (i.e., television, radio, print, etc.)
- Pamphlets
- Business cards

If Someone Says “No”

Remember that not everyone will be able to be a living donor. However, these people can still contribute greatly to this journey by becoming a Champion Partner. And not only *can* they still help, they may still *want* to help. Some of the ways they can continue to make a positive impact on behalf of your loved one include:

- Becoming an advocate.
- Sharing the story.
- Helping out the person in need and/or you with anything involved in finding a donor.

Always stay positive.



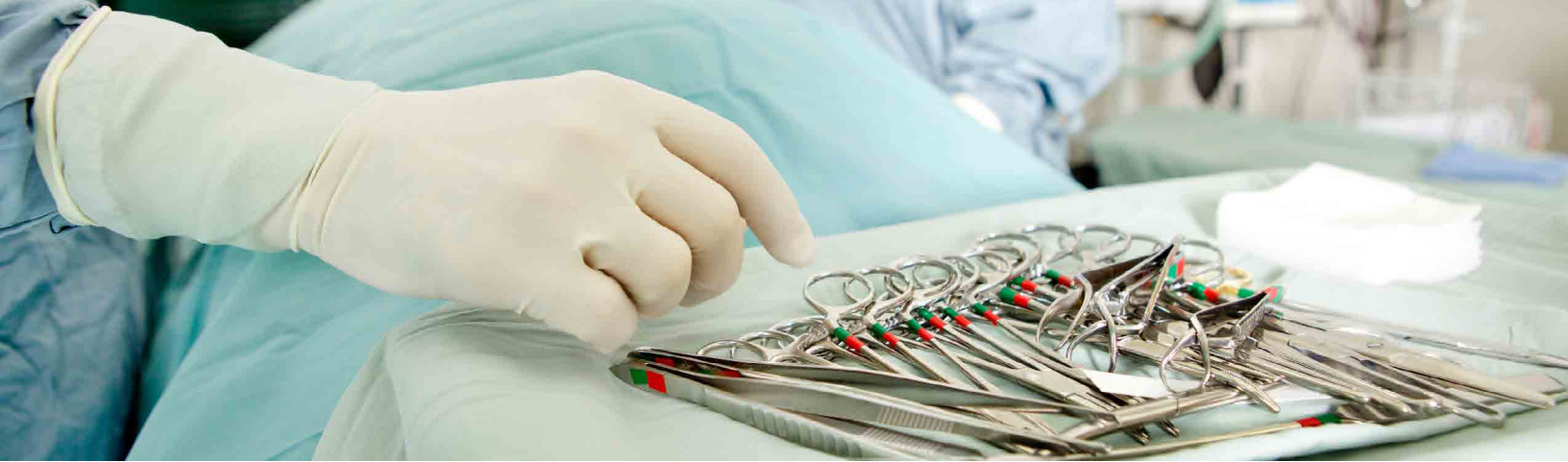
Section 3

The Procedures:
What Will Take Place



“But honestly, I just could not imagine not helping her, and I knew she would do the same for me.”

Jeremy Monteverde
Donor for his mother, Kathy



Now that you've started this journey of being the Champion for someone you care about, you will need to know as much about the procedure as you can. We'll start with the basics and dive a little deeper with both liver and kidney transplants.

General Overview

Most people think they can donate an organ only after they die. But there is another option for both recipients and donors: living donation.

Benefits of Living Donation

There are benefits for both the recipient and donor.

For the recipient:

- Increases the existing overall organ supply, helping to save more of the men, women, and children who are currently waiting for lifesaving transplants.
- Eliminates the time on the waiting list.
- Shortens the time on the waiting list for other people in need.
- Surgery is performed before the person's condition worsens any further, thus improving the odds of long-term recovery since the procedure is done when the one in need is healthier.
- Allows for the surgery to be scheduled at a time that is convenient for both the donor and the person in need.

For the donor:

- Provides the opportunity to save a life.
- Feels that he or she has contributed to the recipient's life — and the lives of the recipient's loved ones — in a very meaningful and lifelong way.


Living donation is not as rare as you might think.

47%

of all transplanted organs in the U.S. are from living donors.

The need for living-liver donors is a big one. 30 million Americans have some form of liver disease.

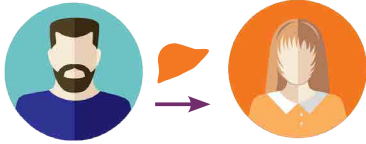


1 person = 1 million 

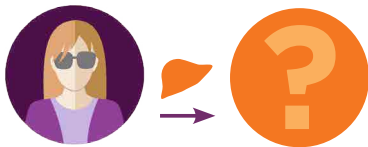
Types of Living Donation

There are three categories of living donations:

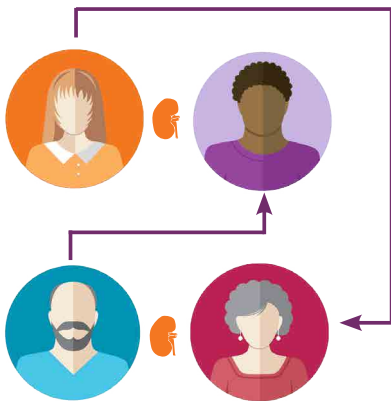
- **Directed Donation:** This is when the donor specifically chooses who will receive the transplant.



- **Non-Directed / Altruistic Donation:** This is when the donor is neither related to nor known by the person in need. He or she makes the donation purely out of selfless reasons. The recipient is determined primarily by medical compatibility.



- **Paired Donations (Kidney Only):** This involves at least two pairs of living-kidney donors and transplant candidates who do not have matching blood types. The transplant candidates “trade” donors so that each recipient receives a kidney from the donor with a compatible blood type.

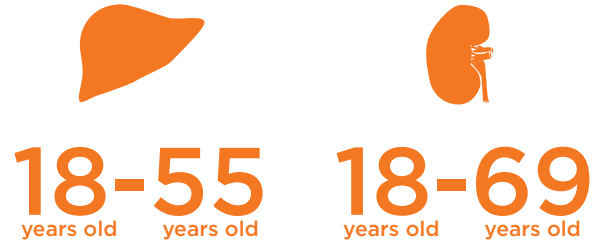


If the UPMC Transplant Selection Committee has medically approved a person for a liver or kidney transplant, he or she should begin talking to family and friends about living donation. The transplant process can start when a potential donor contacts a living-donor transplant nurse coordinator. The coordinator will then gather information about the potential donor and answer questions. The evaluation is then scheduled for the donor candidate over the course of a few days.

Requirements of Living Donation

To be an ideal organ donor, a person should satisfy the following three categories:

Age



Health

The person must be in good general health and have no history of:



Liver disease



Heart disease



Diabetes



HIV



Cancers or other diseases that could complicate the surgery

It's important to note that recovery times may vary, whichever transplant surgery is performed.

If someone is unsure if he or she qualifies as a living donor, the transplant team can help determine if that person would be a good match.

Motivation



The main reason for donating must be an unselfish wish to help the person in need. There is absolutely no financial compensation that comes as a result of it.

Living-Donor Liver Transplant

There are thousands of people on the waiting list for a liver transplant. Unfortunately, less than half of deceased-donor livers are available for transplant. This makes living-liver donation a lifesaving alternative.

What Happens During a Living-Donor Liver Transplant

During a living-donor liver transplant, a portion of the liver from a healthy family member, friend, or altruistic donor is removed and transplanted into the recipient.

The potential donor is carefully evaluated before the surgery to determine if the one in need could benefit from the donor liver, and if the donor can tolerate the operation. The evaluation includes:

- Physical and psychological exams for potential donors.
- Blood work and imaging tests.
- Additional tests.



"I need to be the same blood type as the person in need to become a living-liver donor."

FACT - In the past, yes. Now, no.

If one would like to donate, a member of the transplant team can contact that person to see if he or she would be a good donor.



Randy and Nick's Story

Randy already had a history of health issues when his kidneys slowly began to deteriorate. Not wanting to go on dialysis, he started discussing kidney transplantation with his doctor. His oldest son, Nick decided to get tested to become a living donor. He turned out to be a perfect match. And it was an easy decision to offer his father a chance to return to a normal, healthy life. Randy received his new kidney from his son, and within a few weeks, he was out walking his neighborhood. He's now back to work, continues to exercise, and even squeezes in a few rounds of golf.

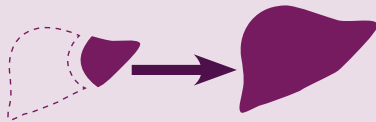
Liver Transplant Process

Here's what to expect:

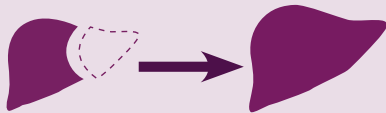
1. The surgeon will remove 25% to 65% of the donor's liver.

2. The recipient's unhealthy liver will be replaced with a portion of the donor's healthy liver.

3. The donor's liver regenerates.



The recipient's liver regenerates.



The coordinator or surgeon will be able to provide more details about a candidate's specific surgery.

Recovery for Living-Donor Liver Transplant

The liver is one of the few organs that can regenerate. It usually takes about eight to ten weeks for it to grow back to full size. The full recovery of the donor generally takes a few months before he or she is back to his or her previous level of health. *However, it's important to note that recovery times with living-donor liver transplant may vary.*



8 to 10 weeks
for the liver to grow back to full size



A living-donor kidney transplant would offer a better life sooner to the more than 26 million Americans with kidney disease and the nearly 3 million who may have type 1 diabetes.

Living-Donor Kidney Transplant

Advances in surgery and care allow people to donate a kidney to help relatives, friends, or even strangers in need of a transplant. Having a living donor can help a recipient avoid the typical wait times of up to several years for a suitable kidney.

Kidney transplants are also made possible through kidney donor chains. A chain starts with an altruistic donor and has the potential to save and improve the lives of people facing kidney failure.

What Happens During a Living-Donor Kidney Transplant

During a living-donor kidney transplant, a healthy kidney from a living donor is transplanted into someone with a failing kidney. Often times, a kidney transplant can be done through minimally invasive surgery. In most cases, living-donor kidney surgery is done with the help of a mini camera.

Prior to transplant surgery, both the donor and person in need undergo a thorough evaluation to determine if a living-donor kidney transplant is the best option. Because, while living donation eliminates the recipient's time on the transplant waiting list, it may not be an appropriate treatment option for everyone.



"I will never be able to return to my daily routine after donating."

FACT - Most living donors are able to return to an independent life when they arrive home — about one week after surgery. After full recovery, a person should be able to live the lifestyle he or she had before the surgery.

Kidney Transplant Process

Here is what to expect during this minimally-invasive kidney surgery:

1. Surgeons insert a mini camera — called a laparoscope — into the abdomen through tiny incisions.

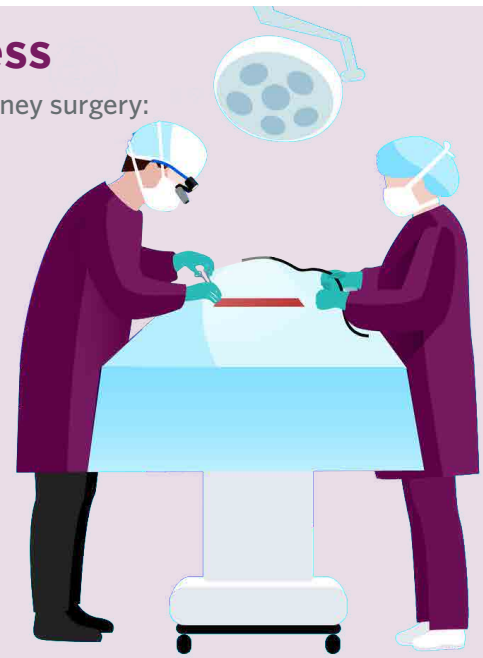


2. The camera allows them to visualize and locate the kidney before removing it through a relatively small incision.

(about three inches)



3. The entire operation takes around three hours.



Recovery for Living-Donor Kidney Transplant

Most kidney donors spend a few days in the hospital to recover. However, we understand that everyone recovers differently. So our kidney transplant team works with donors to provide a personalized treatment plan that meets their needs after surgery. The full recovery of the donor typically takes a few months before he or she is back to their previous level of health and can go back to work. *But again, it's important to note that recovery times with living-donor kidney transplant may vary.*

Regardless of the type of living transplant that is performed, one of the major benefits for the person in need is that it eliminates time spent on the waiting list.

FAQ

Section 4

Answer Guide:
Questions You'll Probably Be Asked



“I had the opportunity
to give the gift of life to
someone else.”

Nick Martini

Living donor for his father, Randy Martini



The decision to become a living donor can be life changing, so naturally, people are going to have questions that you'll need to answer honestly. So to help guide them through a few of their issues, here are some of the more frequent questions that come up and some suggested responses.

Q: What are the risks/dangers that are involved with living donation?

A: Being a living donor requires major surgery. As a result, major risks will be involved, such as:

- Pain
- Infection
- Incisional hernia
- Pneumonia
- Blood clots
- Hemorrhaging
- Potential need for blood transfusions
- Allergic reactions to the anesthesia and subsequent side effects
- Death

There is also the potential of psychological issues that might arise following the surgery. A transplant team member will discuss all potential risks that may be involved with being a living donor.

1954 was the first successfully performed living-donor kidney transplant.
1989 was the first successfully performed living-donor liver transplant.

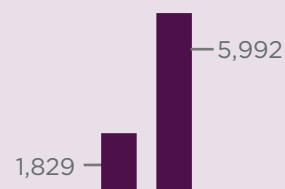
Source: Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Q: Can I donate my liver if I have a medical condition?

A: Donor safety is very important. Generally, to be a living-liver donor you must be between the ages of 18-55, be in good health, and have no history of liver disease, heart disease, cancer, or HIV. You will undergo testing, and your doctor will help you determine if you are healthy enough to donate.

In 1988, there were only 1,829 living donations performed in the U.S. By 2015, that number had grown to 5,992.

Source: Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services



Q: If I change my mind, can the surgery be cancelled?

A: Yes, the transplant can be cancelled at any time because of many possible reasons. The most common is because of some health-related issues with the person in need.

Q: What is the recovery time associated with living donation?

A: Recovery times depend on the health and well-being of each donor. Here are the general rules of thumb regarding each type of transplant.

LIVER

Following living-donor liver surgery, you will move to an inpatient post-surgery unit to make sure you do not need further treatment. From there, you will be transferred to a transplant recovery floor where you could stay for up to one week before going home.

Most liver donors return to:

- An independent life of showering, getting dressed, and doing other simple daily tasks by the time they arrive home after discharge (about one week after surgery).
- Work by six to twelve weeks after surgery.
- Their pre-donation level of health by three months.

KIDNEY

Following living-donor kidney surgery, you will move to a unit to make sure you do not need further treatment. From there, you will be transferred to a transplant recovery floor where you could stay for a few days before going home. It takes up to two months for most living kidney donors to recover fully, depending on their job.

Q: How much of my liver would be removed as a donor?

A: The percentage of the liver that is removed from the donor varies depending on the age and size of the person receiving the transplant. Children receive a smaller portion compared to an adult. The liver is one of the few organs that will regenerate and grow to its full size and function in the donor and recipient in about eight to twelve weeks.

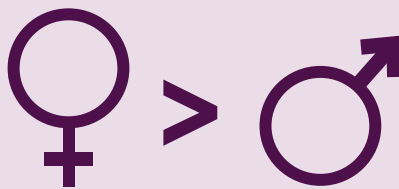
Q: How should I prepare for living-donor liver transplant as a donor?

A: You should stop smoking and be clear of alcohol and drugs. Women should also stop taking oral contraceptives about four weeks before the transplant.

Q: Is there any compensation for being a living donor?

A: A requirement for being a living donor is that the main reason for donating must be an unselfish wish to help the person in need. This is a purely selfless act and there is absolutely no financial compensation that comes as a result of it. With all that in mind, accepting compensation for being a living donor is illegal. However, even though the recipient's insurance and UPMC do not cover lost wages for the donor, it is not illegal for the recipient to offer to help with them. You also can fundraise to cover the costs of lodging or lost wages due to the transplant.

In every year since 1988, female donors have outnumbered male donors.*



*Data subject to change based on future data submission or correction.

Source: Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Q: What happens on the day of liver surgery?

A: On the day of the surgery, you will be admitted to the hospital. There, you will meet with your transplant surgeon and anesthesiologist to review the surgery with you, sign consent forms, and answer any last-minute questions. Following the paperwork, you will proceed to the operating room. You will receive preventative antibiotics.

Q: What type of care is needed for a donor?

A: You will need to identify a caregiver to help you after the surgery for a brief period of time. The caregiver does not need to be with you continuously, but should be readily available to physically help you. You will likely not be able to drive for at least three weeks after the surgery, so someone will need to drive you to and from follow-up appointments.

Q: What is the recovery process like for a donor?

A: As a donor, you will spend one day in the intensive care unit and the next few days in a regular hospital room. Within a few days, you should be starting to feel better and walking more. You should be on a regular diet by that time. Most donors are discharged about seven days after surgery. By the time you are discharged, you should be able to do day-to-day activities for yourself, such as bathing, eating, and walking. You'll need to spend about six to eight weeks at home to recover.

Q: How soon will I be able to get back to my daily routine?

A: Most living donors are able to return to an independent life when they arrive home, about one week after surgery. While recovery times may vary, you can go back to work within 10 to 12 weeks after surgery. Generally, you will return to your pre-donation level of health in about three months. You are not allowed to lift anything heavy or perform strenuous exercise for about six weeks, after which you can gradually resume full activities.

Q: What changes will I need to make to my life after the surgery as a donor?

A: After full recovery, you should be able to live the lifestyle you had before the surgery.



Even though you do not have to be a relative of the person in need to be a living donor, to date, these are the most common donor/recipient relation for living donors:*

- Adult: biological, blood related, full sibling

(40,000+)



- Pediatric: biological, blood related, parent

(8,000+)

*Data subject to change based on future data submission or correction.

Source: Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services



Help is here.

If you have identified a potential donor, please visit UPMC.com/LivingDonor and click "Register to be a Living Donor".

For any questions about living donation, please call [412-647-5800](tel:412-647-5800).

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