



National Kidney Foundation™

Do You Have What it Takes to Give?

We've all heard stories about generous people who donate an organ to a loved one, a colleague at work or a stranger in desperate need. Have you ever wondered if you would be able to become such a donor?

Living organ donation is a big decision requiring careful thought, reflection, and research to learn whether it is the right choice for you. Talking with your family members and friends may help. Some potential donors also find it useful to consult with co-workers, a psychologist, social worker or spiritual advisor.

If you are thinking about live donation, here are a number of questions you need to ask yourself:

- * How do you feel about organ donation?
- * How much do you know about the surgery, recovery and its potential impact on your own health/lifestyle?
- * How will living donation affect you financially? Will you lose wages during your recovery? Are you able to get paid leave from your employer?
- * Who else can be considered as a donor? Will you feel relieved or upset if another person becomes the donor instead of you?
- * Are you physically active? It's recommended that kidney donors avoid sports that involve high risks of collision, to avoid damaging the remaining kidney. Or, do you have a physically demanding job that the surgery may impact?
- * How is your relationship with the recipient? If you have a difficult relationship with the person, consider what you hope such a donation will change or communicate.
- * How will you feel if the organ fails? Or if the recipient is not grateful in the way you imagined? Or if the relationship becomes strained or difficult following your donation. Will you be able to cope?
- * Do you live near the recipient and the transplant center where the donation will take place? If the donor lives near the transplant center, the donation will be logistically easier-- and save travel, lodging and other expenses.
- * Do you smoke or are you overweight? If so, you might have to quit smoking or lose weight prior to the donation.

* Do you have plans to change occupations soon? If so, how would donation affect your health insurance coverage? Life insurance? Some branches of the military, police and fire departments won't accept individuals with one kidney. If you are in these fields or considering entering such a field, think about how living donation might affect you.

Potential donors will also need to consider their overall health, particularly any medical problems such as high blood pressure or diabetes and other pre-existing conditions.

To learn more or to chat online with those who have already become living donors visit www.livingdonors.org