



What is an IRD kidney?

An **IRD kidney** is a kidney donated from a person who has died that has a slightly higher risk of passing on an infection like hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV), or HIV.

All donor kidneys are carefully tested for infectious diseases. However, if a donor was infected right before they died, the tests may not show it.

Because of this, certain kidneys are categorized as **increased risk of disease (IRD) kidneys** because they are from deceased donors who may be more likely to have gotten HBV, HCV, or HIV before they died.

These are donors who, in the year before they died, either injected illegal drugs, were in jail or prison, had sex that was considered risky, or were diagnosed or treated for a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

What if someone gets an infection from an IRD kidney?

In very rare cases, someone may get an infection from an IRD kidney that tested negative for an infection, but later passed the infection to the recipient.

The chance of this is very low. It ranges from

<0.1% (1 in 1,000) for HCV to <0.01% (1 in 10,000) for HIV

And these infections can be treated after the kidney is transplanted. Transplant teams monitor IRD kidney recipients for these infections and start treatments as soon as possible. HCV is very curable with 2-3 months of treatment. There are no cures for HBV or HIV, but there are treatments that work very well to control the virus and keep you healthy.

Talk with your transplant team to learn more about these treatments.

How IRD kidneys are similar to other kidneys:	How IRD kidneys are different than other kidneys:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work as well and last as long • Have the same chance of being rejected (when the recipient's immune system attacks the new kidney) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often come from younger, healthier donors • Have a slightly higher chance of passing an infectious disease to the recipient

Why might I choose an IRD kidney?

Choosing an IRD kidney may mean a shorter time on the transplant waitlist and on dialysis, which is better for your health. In fact, being on dialysis for 5 or more years can be hard on your body, raising your chance of serious health problems or even death.

Many people on the waitlist could benefit from an **IRD kidney**. You may benefit if you:

- Are an older adult
- Have been on dialysis for a long time or do not do well on dialysis
- Have been on the waitlist for a long time
- Have a rare blood type or other health problems that may make it harder to get a transplant in the future

Questions to ask about IRD kidneys

Here are some questions you can ask your transplant team about IRD kidneys.

About your health and IRD kidneys:

- For me and my health, what are the pros and cons of accepting an IRD kidney?

About the IRD kidney transplant process:

- If I get an IRD kidney, will I need different post-transplant care?
- If I get an infection from an IRD kidney, what treatment will I get and for how long?
- Are there different costs to getting an IRD kidney?

Questions to ask the transplant center:

- What is your transplant center's average wait time for an IRD kidney?
- Can I talk to other people from your center who have gotten an IRD kidney?



Learn more



What if I'm open to an IRD kidney?

If you are open to an IRD kidney, let your transplant doctors know right away.

Your transplant doctors will ask if you are open to an IRD kidney during your evaluation and yearly follow-up appointments. But you can talk to them about your decision to accept an IRD kidney anytime.

Saying you are open to an IRD kidney does not mean it is the only type of kidney you can get – it just may give you more options and a kidney sooner.

For more information, contact the National Kidney Foundation

Toll-free help line: **855.NKF.CARES** or email: **nkfcares@kidney.org**