The purpose of this document is to provide you with the information to consider in deciding whether to participate as a living kidney donor. Consent must be based on an understanding of the nature of the intervention, as well as the risks, benefits, and alternatives for both you and the recipient. Please ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

Information on Living Kidney Donation and Transplantation

Thousands of patients have received transplants from living donors. Parents, siblings, and other relatives can donate a kidney to a family member. Unrelated donors (for example, spouses or friends) may also donate their organ for a candidate. Living non-directed (altruistic or stranger-to-stranger) donation is a growing source of kidney donors.

Kidney Transplantation involves removing a healthy kidney from your body and placing it into a recipient’s body where it can perform all the functions that a failing kidney cannot. Your kidney will be removed using 1 of 2 methods: laparoscopic nephrectomy or open nephrectomy.

Laparoscopic nephrectomy is a minimally invasive procedure in which a special camera called a laparoscope is used to produce an inside view of the abdominal cavity to remove a kidney. Laparoscopic kidney removal is considered minimally invasive because it requires 3 or 4 small (1-inch or less) incisions rather than one large incision in the abdomen. During the procedure, carbon dioxide is passed through one of the incisions into the abdominal cavity to lift the abdominal wall away from the organs below, creating more operating space to perform the surgery. The laparoscope and surgical instruments are then inserted through the other incisions. The surgeon will use laparoscopic instruments to separate the kidney. Once your kidney is separated, your surgeon will remove it through a non-muscle cutting incision in the bikini area (3-4 inches).

Most people are eligible for laparoscopic nephrectomy, but for some donors it may be better medically to remove the kidney through a traditional ‘open’ procedure. Your surgeon will complete a preoperative evaluation to determine whether a laparoscopic nephrectomy is appropriate for you. Note that a small percentage of laparoscopic procedures must be converted to open procedures. During open surgery, the surgeon makes a 6- to 10-inch incision in your abdomen to remove the donor kidney.

Once your kidney is removed (using either surgical procedure), another surgical team will immediately prepare the kidney for transplantation into the recipient while your surgeon completes your procedure. In most cases, your donated kidney will begin performing the work of the recipient’s failed kidneys soon after the transplant.

You will require long-term follow-up after the donation procedure and you can obtain this care here at the Cleveland Clinic or elsewhere if you choose. Follow-up care will consist of clinic visits and blood work. Your name and clinical information will also be placed in a Cleveland Clinic database registry for tracking and follow-up purposes.
Transplant centers are required to report living donor follow-up information for at least two years.

**Medical, Psychological and Financial Risks Associated with being a Living Donor**

Potential risks associated with being a living donor include but may not be limited to the following:

**Potential Medical Risks**
- Potential for surgical complications including risk of donor death
- Potential for organ failure and the need for a future organ transplant for the donor
- Potential for other medical complications including long-term complications currently unforeseen
- Scars or hernias
- Pain
- Fatigue
- Abdominal or bowel symptoms such as bloating and nausea
- Increased risk with the use of over-the-counter medications and supplements

**Potential Psychosocial Risks**
- Potential for problems with body image
- Possibility of post surgery adjustment problems
- Possibility of transplant recipient rejection and need for re-transplantation
- Possibility that the transplant recipient will have a recurrence of disease
- Possibility of transplant recipient death
- Potential impact of donation on the donor’s lifestyle

**Potential Financial Risks**
- Personal expenses of travel, housing, and lost wages related to live donation might not be reimbursed; however, the potential donor should be informed that resources may be available to defray some donation-related costs
- Child care costs
- Possible loss of employment
- Potential impact on the ability to obtain future employment
- Potential impact on the ability to obtain or afford health, disability and life insurance
- Health problems experienced by living donors following donation may be covered by the recipient's insurance
Benefits associated with being a living donor

- Living donation eliminates the candidate’s need for placement on the national waiting list.
- Transplant surgery can be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time rather than performed as an emergency operation.
- Transplants from blood-related living donors are often more successful, because there is a better tissue match between the living donor and the recipient.
- Perhaps most importantly, there can be a psychological benefit in living donation. The recipient can experience positive feelings knowing that the gift came from a loved one or a caring stranger, and the donor experiences the satisfaction of knowing that he or she has contributed to the improved health of the recipient.

Alternatives to living donation

You do not have to participate as a living kidney donor. If you choose not to be a donor the recipient may receive a deceased donor kidney transplant. Their name will be placed a National computer waiting list and every effort will be made to find a compatible donor kidney as soon as possible.

If you decide to participate, you may change your mind at ANY time, including the day of your scheduled surgery. If you change your mind, simply notify any member of the Kidney Transplant Team. If you change your mind about participating, the donor’s decision and reasons are kept confidential.

Questions

If you have further medical questions about living kidney transplantation, please contact the Kidney Transplant Team (216-445-3150 or 1-800-223-2273 Ext. 53150). Also, information about living kidney transplantation is available on the Internet at www.unos.org.

If you have questions about insurance coverage, please contact one of our financial counselors (216-444-9286). Most costs for the living donor are covered by the recipient’s insurance coverage. However, this may vary with individual insurance payers.
CONSENT FOR LIVING KIDNEY DONATION

- I have read the above information and have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I agree to participate as a living kidney donor.
- I consent to having my donor health information maintained and released as part of the organ recipient’s medical record.
- A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

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