



For some, a chance for a longer, healthier life

A successful kidney transplant is closest to natural kidney function and is considered one of the most effective treatments for end stage renal disease (ESRD). New advances in technology, donor matching, and surgery have greatly increased transplant success rates and many people who have had kidney transplants are living longer and healthier lives. However, as with any major surgery, there are pros and cons to consider.

What to consider before a kidney transplant procedure

If you elect to have a kidney transplant, you should know that your best chance for a successful surgery depends on:



Your overall health

Your doctor can help determine if you are a good candidate for a kidney transplant. To make sure you are healthy enough for surgery, you will need to have a complete medical exam and a series of tests to screen for any potential medical conditions or risks.



A good kidney donor match

For a kidney transplant to be successful, the new kidney must be from a donor who has the same tissue type and a compatible blood type. An ideal match is from a living donor—usually a relative with the same tissue and blood type—whose genetic characteristics are most like your own. If getting a kidney from a living donor is not possible, you can still have a good match, but you will need to be placed on a waiting list to receive a kidney from a nonliving donor. In either case, your Fresenius Kidney Care care team can help guide you on finding a good match and connect you to appropriate resources.



Timing

With kidney transplants, the earlier the better. If possible, it is best to have your kidney transplant surgery before you actually need dialysis. Since the average wait time is approximately 3 to 5 years, people waiting for a kidney donor will need to maintain their kidney function through dialysis treatments until a kidney is available. During your waiting period, you have a number of effective dialysis choices.

The search for a living kidney donor: asking the big question

If you become a candidate for a kidney transplant, your first reaction may be to ask a relative or friend to donate their kidney to you. Or you may find it difficult to ask such a big question. Before you make “the big ask,” learn all you can about kidney transplants and find out just what it means for a living donor to give a kidney.

When you are ready to ask the big question:

- /// **Share your story.** You may want to privately discuss your situation with close friends and relatives or give a big shout-out via social media to spread the word. If you do go “social,” play it safe and be selective about your audience.
- /// **Try not to take it too personally.** Some people who want to donate their kidney may not be a good match. Others may say “no” for a variety of reasons, but it doesn’t mean they don’t care about you.
- /// **Be informed.** When people ask you what it means to donate a kidney, know the facts, and help them learn more.
- /// **Stay positive.** Speak with a social worker or another counselor to help ease your fears.
- /// **Have a backup plan.** Place your name on donor waiting lists in case you can’t find a living kidney donor on your own. With today’s advanced donor matching technology, it is possible to find a good match with a living or nonliving donor.

Learn more about kidney transplants and finding a good donor:

Kidney.org/LivingDonation

TransplantLiving.org

AmericanTransplantFoundation.org

LivingDonorAssistance.org



MORE QUESTIONS?

Learn more about kidney transplants and dialysis treatments at FreseniusKidneyCare.com/Transplants.