



Patient & Family Guide  
2022

# Finding a Living Kidney Donor



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# Finding a Living Kidney Donor

## What are the benefits of a kidney transplant from a living donor?

- Transplant recipients who receive a kidney from a living donor generally have better outcomes than recipients who receive a kidney from a deceased donor.
- The waiting time for a kidney transplant from a living donor is much shorter than from a deceased donor. Transplant from a deceased donor can take months or years.
- If you find a living donor early in your kidney disease, you may not need dialysis.

**Before you reach out to a living donor, talk with your nephrologist (kidney doctor) to find out if a transplant may be right for you.**

## How do I find a living donor?

It can be hard to reach out to possible living donors. You may feel many emotions. This is normal. Talking with your Recipient Coordinator or social worker can help.

## You may feel:

- › Nervous about how to ask
- › Disappointed that no one has offered to donate
- › Confused about who may be a possible living donor
- › Scared to ask in case the person says no
- › Worried about how the donation will affect the person and their daily life
- › Worried about how the donation will affect the person's future health
- › Anxious that you will feel like you owe the donor and that your relationship might change

You will feel more comfortable if you know how living kidney donation works.

- Donors live healthy, normal lives with one kidney.
- Donors are screened carefully to make sure they are medically OK to donate a kidney.
- The donor screening process is **confidential**. A possible donor can get information and be screened before making a commitment to donate.

- A possible donor must start the screening process themselves. This is done by talking to the Living Kidney Donor Coordinator in their area (see page 6).
- At any time, a possible donor can choose not to go ahead with the donation.
- At any time, a possible donor can be found not suitable to donate.
- If the possible donor is not a match, you may be able to take part in the kidney paired donation program through Canadian Blood Services. For more information, visit:
  - › <https://blood.ca/en/organs-tissues>
- The Donor Reimbursement Program in each province can help donors with some of the costs related to screening and donation.
- You are not allowed to give the possible donor money or gifts. In Canada, it is illegal to buy and sell organs. A donor must come forward freely without pressure.

## **Who should I ask to be a donor?**

Many donors say that they knew they wanted to donate as soon as they learned of the need. You may wish to ask your family, friends, work colleagues, or acquaintances (people you have met but are not close with).

## Sharing your story

- Once you are comfortable talking about living donation, you can start to reach out to possible donors.
- As you share your story, ask people to share it with others. The more people who know that you need a kidney, the greater your chance of finding a donor.
- You may wish to have a living donor champion. This is a person(s) who helps you get the message out about your need for a donor.
- Write a letter or email, or make a video about your kidney disease and why you need a transplant. Send it to your family and friends to share with others.
- You may wish to use social media (like a blog or Facebook) to tell people about your need for a kidney transplant. Please talk to your Recipient Coordinator if you are considering this.
- Encourage your support person(s) to come to your medical appointments with you. This will help them learn about your kidney disease and living donation.
- The Kidney Foundation of Canada office in your area can support you.

They can:

- › connect you with other people with kidney disease who know what you are going through.
- › give education and support.

## **What happens when a person says they may be interested in being my living kidney donor?**

When a person tells you they may be interested in donating a kidney, they must go through a long screening process to find out if living donation is right for them.

1. The possible donor will talk to the Living Kidney Donor Coordinator in your area.
2. Together, they will decide whether to do screening tests.
3. If the possible donor and the Living Kidney Donor Coordinator agree, testing can start.
4. After the possible donor has been tested, they will talk more with the Living Kidney Donor Coordinator about whether donating is right for them.
5. If the possible donor decides to donate, the surgery will be scheduled. The possible donor may decide not to donate up until the time of surgery.

# Atlantic Canada Living Kidney Donation Programs

<b>Location</b>	<b>Phone number</b>
<b>Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cape Breton only</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› 902-473-5501</li><li>› 902-567-2839</li></ul>
<b>New Brunswick</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bathurst</li><li>• Moncton</li><li>• Saint John</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› 506-544-3567</li><li>› 506-869-2441</li><li>› 506-648-6968</li></ul>
<b>Newfoundland</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Corner Brook</li><li>• St. John's</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› 709-784-6190</li><li>› 709-777-3601</li></ul>

## Resources

### The Kidney Foundation of Canada

- › <https://kidney.ca>

### Multi-Organ Transplant Program of Atlantic Canada (MOTP)

- › <https://www.motpatlantic.ca>

