



Living Kidney Donation Frequently Asked Question

What are the advantages of having a living donor?

- Better short-term and long-term outcomes, for recipients of living donor kidneys compared to deceased donor recipients
- Living Donor kidneys usually last longer
- Decreased wait time resulting in a quicker return to an improved quality of life, especially for patients on dialysis
- Scheduled surgery, making it more convenient for patients and their families
- Complete medical testing is possible with living donors, helping ensure the highest quality kidneys for transplant.
- Receiving a kidney transplant sooner often means patients are in better health, which makes recovery easier and improves the outcomes of the transplant
- The kidney is transplanted into the recipient immediately after the donor surgery, which helps preserve kidney function and results in reduced complications

What are the risks involved with a living donor?

In appropriate candidates, kidney donation is safe. There are surgical risks related to the use of anesthesia and possible bleeding or clotting. Research indicates that the long-term medical risks of having only one remaining kidney are low. Although most of us are born with two kidneys, only one working kidney is needed to sustain life. This allows a healthy person the chance to donate a kidney to someone in need.

Does the donor need to be a relative?

No. People can donate a kidney to a friend, spouse or any other non-blood related person, as well as to a relative. Many donors are not related and may only be an acquaintance of the recipient. Some people even want to donate to an anonymous stranger.

Does the donor need to be the same blood type?

No. Even if a potential donor has a different blood type, we can often find another donor/recipient pair with whom we can exchange. This is called “Kidney Paired Exchange.”

What does a donor have to do to be tested and approved for organ donation?

The University of Kentucky Transplant staff carefully reviews each person's situation to see if the person is a suitable donor. Donors should be in good health, both physically and emotionally, and of an appropriate age. Certain medical problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and urinary tract or kidney problems may make someone ineligible for donation, but we encourage anyone interested to fill out a questionnaire to be tested and not rule yourself or anyone else out.

After filling out an application, a donor will be contacted to let them know if they are eligible to continue testing and a medical work-up will be completed. Donors are educated on the risks associated with surgery, hospitalization, and recovery. Every donor will also be assigned a nurse who will meet with them to discuss their decision and answer their questions, making sure the donor is completely comfortable with their decision.

How is the donor's surgery performed?

The surgery to remove the donor's kidney is most always done using a laparoscope, a surgical instrument that is connected to a video camera. Using this means smaller incision/s. This results in less pain and scarring and a more rapid recovery. The surgery takes about three hours and the donor often gets to go home 1-2 days after surgery.

What are the costs for the donor?

The recipient's insurance or Medicare pays for all donor medical expenses. Travel costs and time away from work are often not covered by insurance and need to be considered. There are programs that may be available to help cover some costs. This should be discussed with your nurse coordinator.

What about After donation care?

During recovery, the donor will be seen for early follow-up care at the University of Kentucky Transplant Clinic. We also monitor kidney function and blood pressure for several years after donation. Following that, as with everyone, it is good to obtain routine annual medical examinations, including labs, blood pressure and urinalysis screening with their local physician. There are no special diets or medications that need to be taken after kidney donation.



The Do NOTs of Seeking a Living Donor

- Please do not solicit for donors with any promise or implication of gain; financial or otherwise. It is illegal to pay or coerce someone to donate a kidney.
- Do not put pressure on potential donors. It is important that donors feel free to make up their own minds and feel comfortable with their decision.
- Do not call the transplant center on behalf of donors. It is important that the potential donor call or reach out to us on their own.
- Do not rule out someone as a potential donor. The University of Kentucky Living Donor Program has a process to determine eligibility.



Financial Considerations

As a living donor, you should be aware of the financial aspects of donation.

Covered by Recipient's Insurance

- Screening tests
- Surgery
- Follow-up care

Not Covered by Recipient's Insurance

- Time off work
- Travel expenses
- Expenses for treatment of unrelated conditions (For example, if a screening test shows cancerous cells, treatment for this condition would not be covered by the recipient's insurance).

Donors should check with their own insurance prior to donation. Although unlikely, the act of donating a kidney could possibly affect future insurance coverage. We recommend that you have insurance prior to donating a kidney.

For travel expenses and other funds, the [National Living Donor Assistance Center \(NLDAC\)](#) offers a grant to donors. There are income qualifications that both the donor and the recipient must meet for the donor to be eligible.



Post like a PRO

Personal:

People want to know about the person who needs a kidney. Why is their need so important? What do they want to do with their life when they are well? What do they still want to accomplish with their life?

Relatable:

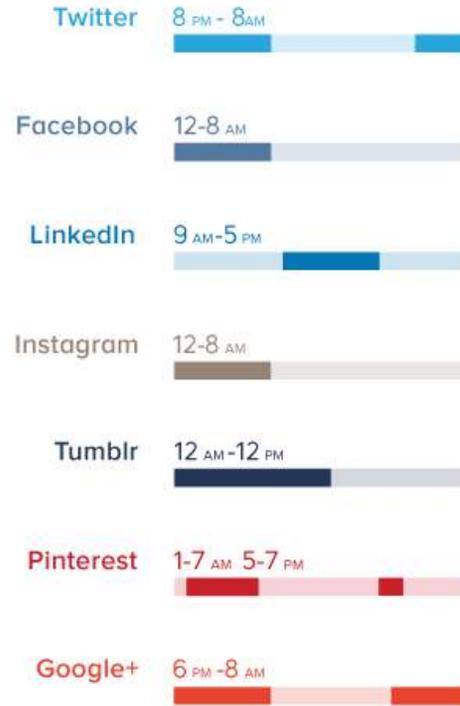
Who is this person who needs a kidney? Are they a mother, father, grandparent, spouse? Who counts on them, who wants them in their life for as long as possible? These facts help others “relate”. Make sure to include photos or short videos with friends or family in your posts.

Often:

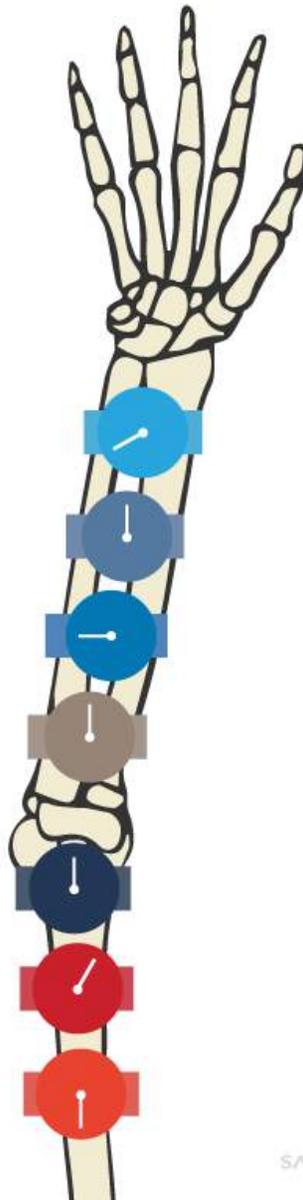
Don't let people on Social Media forget what that person is going through; doctor's visits, days when they feel great, and days they don't. What were they able to do when they felt well? What did they want to do when they didn't feel well? Throw in some little-known facts or statistics about kidney disease on occasion.

Posting Dead Zones

Literally the worst times to post on social media.

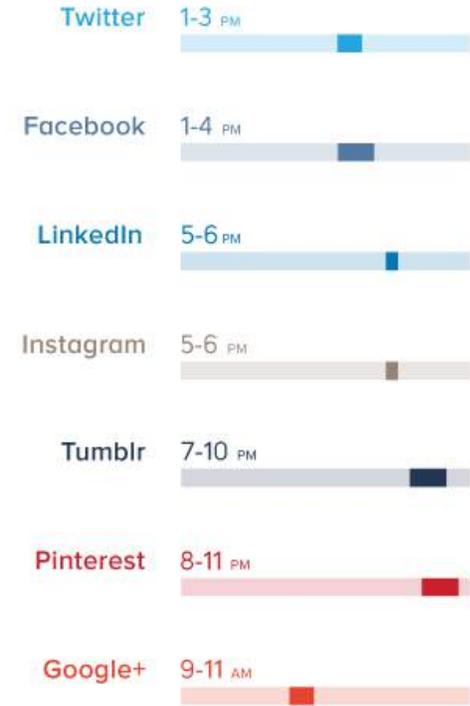


All times are Eastern Standard Time.

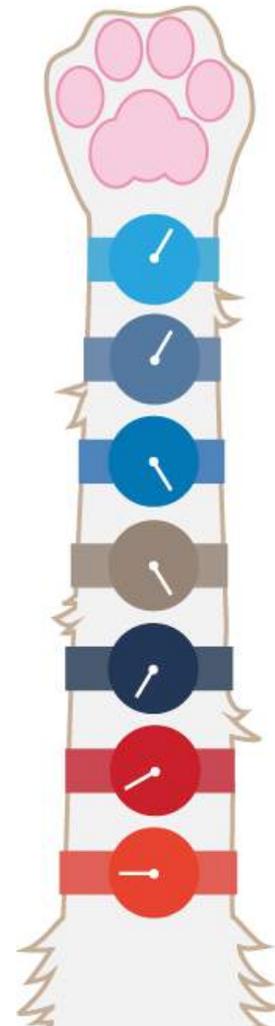


Timing Is Everything

Post smarter right meow.



All times are Eastern Standard Time. SA





Sample Letter/Social Media Post

Dear Friends,

Some of you may know that I (or your loved one's name) have(has) kidney disease. Over time, my (his/her) kidney disease has gotten worse and now they are not working enough to keep me (him/her) alive. This is what I (he/she) am (is) dealing with now, and my (his/her) options are limited to dialysis treatments for the rest of my (his/her) life or a kidney transplant.

Getting dialysis requires being at a center three times a week for around four hours at a time. This works well enough to keep someone alive but is not like a working kidney. A transplant would offer me (him/her) the hopes of living a longer, healthier and more normal life. It would also give me (him/her) more time to do the things I love like spending time with my family and friends.

Getting a kidney transplant is not easy. There are over 100,000 people waiting for a deceased donor. Time is not on our side. Some people wait for many years and others die while waiting. The average wait time for a deceased donor is about five years. There is another option: receiving a kidney from a living donor.

Asking friends or family members to consider donating a kidney is difficult, but it greatly improves the chances of getting a transplant and improves my (his/her) chances of living longer and healthier.

You might not know a lot about living kidney donation-I didn't before kidney disease hit home. I am sure some people are afraid of the surgery and what living with one kidney will mean for them.

Here is some basic information:

- Some people can live a healthy life with only one kidney.
- Donor surgery can be done laparoscopically.
- The recuperation time is usually quick.
- The cost of the evaluation and surgery is covered by the recipient's insurance.
- You get a nurse assigned specifically to you to look out for your best interests.

Thank you for taking time to read this story. If you want to donate or have questions, you may contact the University of Kentucky Transplant Center at (859) 323-2467.