

# Why Become a Living Kidney Donor?



Health Care

A living donor makes all the difference in helping a patient receive a life-saving kidney. Relatives, loved ones, friends, and people who wish to remain anonymous may serve as living donors.

## Urgent need for kidney donors

# 90,000

Americans are waiting for kidney transplants.

More than 10% live in the San Francisco Bay Area<sup>1</sup>



A patient might spend **up to 10 years** on dialysis while waiting<sup>3</sup>

Average wait for a kidney from a deceased donor in California is **5 – 8 years**



47%  
Latinx

22%

Asians and Pacific Islanders

19%

White Americans

11%

Black Americans

1%

Native Americans and Multiethnics

## Types of living donors



### Direct

Donors for a family member or friend in need.



### Indirect

Donors in a "paired" or "chain donation." The donor's organ goes to a stranger in exchange for a compatible organ donated to their loved one. Multiple pairs of living donors and recipients may be linked in a donation "chain" to maximize the number of matched transplants.



### Non-direct

Donors without an intended recipient, whom they know personally, resulting in more chain donations.

## People of color are more likely to experience kidney failure.<sup>4</sup>

Latinx are **1.3 times more likely** than non-Latinx



Black Americans represent **35%** of those with kidney failure



The rates have **doubled** in Asian Americans ages 30-39



## After you donate a kidney

Your **1** remaining kidney will compensate and grow so you can live a normal life.



Donors usually stay in the hospital for **2 days** after surgery. Most donors can return to normal activities **within 6 weeks**.

Learn more at [stanfordhealthcare.org/donatekidney](https://stanfordhealthcare.org/donatekidney)

1 OPTN Organ Procurement Transplant Network, accessed August 31, 2022, <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov>

2 "State data," Organ Procurement & Transplantation Network, accessed April 13, 2023, <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/data/view-data-reports/state-data/>

3 Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Program, Stanford Health Care, accessed March 22, 2022, <https://stanfordhealthcare.org/medical-clinics/kidney-transplant-program.html>

4 National Kidney Foundation, accessed April 18, 2023, <https://www.kidney.org>

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### How risky is living donor surgery?

The surgery to donate a kidney is generally safe; the risk of death is very low at 3 in 10,000. Find more information about risks on the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) website.<sup>5</sup>

### Can adults over age 50 donate?

Yes. Some people have donated in their late 60s. All potential living donors undergo a thorough medical evaluation to determine if donation is safe.

### What if I am not a match for the person I want to donate a kidney to?

If you are not a match, you can become part of a “donation chain” whereby you donate your kidney to another recipient in exchange for a compatible kidney for your loved one. A donation chain results in two or more transplants, including one for your family member or friend and another for a compatible recipient of your kidney.<sup>6</sup>

### Do my faith and traditions permit organ donation?

Many religions view organ donation as an act of kindness or a matter of individual conscience. If you have questions or concerns, consult your spiritual advisor.

### Who is qualified to become a living donor?

Living donors must be in good health. All potential living donors undergo a comprehensive medical evaluation to determine whether donation is safe for both recipient and donor. We welcome potential living donors of all races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations.

### Where can I learn about living donors' experiences?

Find donor and patient stories in the UNOS Transplant Living community at [transplantliving.org/community](https://transplantliving.org/community), [donatelife.net/stories](https://donatelife.net/stories), and [donatelife.california.org](https://donatelife.california.org).

### Does Stanford Health Care offer information and support for living donors?

Our social workers and team facilitate peer-to-peer appointments for potential donors who have questions and need support. Independent donor advocates represent the donor's rights and provide support from the moment the donor contacts our program to after donation. Staff interpreters are available in person, by phone, and by video in the most requested languages, including Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Russian, American Sign Language (ASL), Farsi/Dari, and Korean.

### Do I need health insurance to donate a kidney?

A donor's own health insurance is not required and is not involved in the donation process. You will not be billed for medical workup or procedures directly related to the donation, even if you do not end up ever donating. Our expert team can also talk to you about how to discuss kidney donation with your employer and about programs that may cover nonmedical expenses related to kidney donation.

### How can I learn more?

- Whether or not you are sure you want to become a living kidney donor, the first step is to start the conversation and call our living donor team at **650-498-8382**. We are ready to answer all questions about kidney living donation.
- If you are interested in becoming a donor for a loved one, friend, or a person in need on Stanford Health Care's kidney transplant list, the next step is to complete our living donor medical questionnaire to determine your eligibility to donate, [stanfordhealthcare.org/donatekidney](https://stanfordhealthcare.org/donatekidney).
- To learn more about living donation; important living donation facts; and inspiring donor stories, visit [stanfordhealthcare.org/livingdonor](https://stanfordhealthcare.org/livingdonor).

<sup>5</sup> “Pros and Cons for a Living Donor,” UNOS Transplant Living, accessed August 31, 2022, <https://transplantliving.org/kidney/pros-and-cons-for-a-living-donor>

<sup>6</sup> “Kidney Donor Chains,” Kidney Transplant, <https://stanfordhealthcare.org/medical-treatments/k/kidney-transplant-surgery/types/chain-donation.html>