

MY TYPE OF HERO

Making the decision to become a living donor requires a lot of soul-searching, and a lot of research.

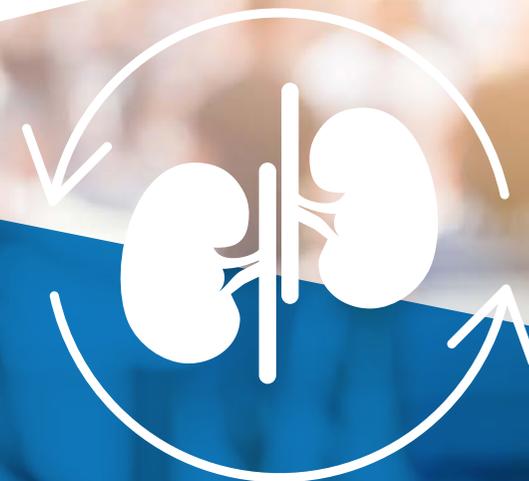
CAMC is here to provide support and guidance for you every step of the way with an experienced team of transplantation specialists.

You might be just the type to change a life.

JUST MY TYPE

LIVING DONATION

Be someone's perfect match.



Kidney Transplant Center

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Charleston, WV 25301
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camc.org/transplant



MY TYPE OF JOURNEY

A lot goes into the decision to donate. It's important to learn as much as you can, and to understand a lot of emotions can be involved.

Process your emotions.

Most living donors say the experience is incredibly gratifying; in fact few, if any, living donors feel regret after the surgery.

This is not to suggest that kidney donors do not have concerns regarding the surgery. That's why it is important to learn as much as possible about the process, to discuss and to evaluate it, before deciding to give a kidney.

Confront doubts and fears.

It's normal if you feel afraid of the prospect of giving a kidney, or feel guilty about your own reluctance. Remember that you alone must be comfortable with your final decision.

Understand pressure from friends and family is common.

Family members and friends can go through a full spectrum of emotions when you express your interest in becoming a donor. It generally helps if you share your feelings about your reasons for the decision and can describe the procedures involved.

Make the decision carefully.

The donation of a kidney must be a voluntary act. Your individual circumstances will be evaluated by the medical staff, who will carefully consider not only technical matches, but cultural ones. If you don't match the recipient's medical need, there may be an option through the paired kidney exchange. The exchange occurs when a living kidney donor is incompatible with the recipient and exchanges kidneys with another donor/recipient pair.

MY TYPE OF MATCH

Once you're ready to become a living donor, a physician will initiate the process to discover if you're the recipient's type.

Understand how you can help.

You don't have to be related to be a match and you don't have to be a match to donate. You could also help your loved one by donating to a paired donation program where your donation may set off a "chain" of donations.

Know the criteria for being a donor.

Once you say "yes," you'll be evaluated by the transplant team, and the following criteria could determine if you're a match.

Blood type

Your blood type (A, B, AB, or O) must be compatible with the recipient's blood type.

Antibodies

Your immune system may produce antibodies that act specifically against something in the recipient's tissue. To see whether this is the case, a small sample of your blood will be mixed with a small sample of the recipient's blood in a tube.

Pass a health exam.

To determine your general health, several routine tests are conducted, including a complete medical history and physical exam, a chest X-ray, an electrocardiogram, and blood and urine tests.

MY TYPE OF SURGERY

Each donor's experience is different, but most say the donation process was incredibly positive.

Know the risks.

The operation involves the same level of risk for the donor as any other major surgery. The risk of a death in a major surgery, in which a general anesthetic is used, is less than 1 in 10,000 cases.

Most donors experience no medical complications as a direct result of the surgery.

Recover at your own pace.

Donors typically have a rapid and uneventful recovery. Immediately following the operation, you might feel tired as a natural reaction to surgery and the anesthetic. Any discomfort generally decreases as you become more active. Typically, you'll be in the hospital for about two days.

Return to normal activity.

Your doctor will determine how rapidly you can resume your normal level of activity based on your rate of recovery. Generally, donors are advised to avoid heavy lifting for about six weeks following hospitalization.

Understand the costs.

Medicare, which will pay part of the treatment costs for kidney patients, pays all of the donor's medical expenses if the recipient is eligible for Medicare's end-stage renal disease program.

Generally, public and private insurance programs will not pay the travel, meal and lodging expenses that the donor incurs for testing before the surgery and for follow-up visits after the operation. Living donor assistance programs may be available for qualifying donors.