



# QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL KIDNEY PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION

## General information about Kidney Transplants

The purpose of kidney transplantation is to give a healthy kidney to a person who has kidney disease. A successful kidney transplant may prevent the need for dialysis and the complications associated with kidney failure. For many years, the kidney that was transplanted had to come from a person who had died, from a "deceased donor." But there are not enough deceased donors for the number of people who need kidney transplants. Although living donor kidney transplantation is becoming more common, there are still many myths associated with living donor kidney transplantation.

Here are some frequently asked question and answers.

We hope this helps you to understand more about a Kidney Transplant.

### **Myth -1: A kidney donor will have to take medications for the rest of their life**

**Fact.** A kidney donor will be given prescriptions for pain medication and stool softeners at discharge from the hospital. These are only for the immediate post-operative period, after that time, a donor does not have to take medication as a result of being a donor.

### **Myth -2: A kidney donor will have debilitating pain for an extended period of time.**

**Fact.** A kidney donor will have some pain after surgery from both the incisions and related to gas and bloating. This pain will diminish in the days following surgery and can be controlled with pain medication if necessary.

### **Myth -3: A kidney donor will be on bed rest following surgery.**

**Fact.** A kidney donor will be out of bed and walking independently before discharge from the hospital.

### **Myth -4: A kidney donor will be in the hospital for an extended period of time after surgery.**

**Fact.** A kidney donor will be hospitalized for two nights (i.e. if surgery is on a Tuesday, the donor will typically be discharged on Thursday).

### **Myth -5: A kidney donor can no longer participate in sports or exercise.**

**Fact.** A kidney donor should be able to return to regular activities and exercise at approximately 4-6 weeks following surgery.

### **Myth -6: A kidney donor will have to follow a new diet plan following donation.**

**Fact.** A kidney donor should eat a healthy, well balanced diet. There are no dietary restrictions following donation.

### **Myth -7: A kidney donor can no longer consume alcohol following donation.**

**Fact.** While excessive alcohol use is always dangerous, a kidney donor can consume alcohol in moderation.

**Myth -8: A female kidney donor should not get pregnant after donation.**

**Fact.** A female kidney donor should wait 3-6 months' time after donation to become pregnant. The body requires time to recover from the surgery and to adjust to living with one kidney prior to pregnancy.

**Myth -9: A kidney donor's sex life will be negatively affected by donation.**

**Fact.** A kidney donor may engage in sexual activity when they feel well enough to do so.

**Myth -10: I'm too old to be a donor, you wouldn't want my organs?**

**Fact.** Age is not always a barrier. All people who would like to be considered as donors will have to undergo a detailed medical assessment to ensure they are fit and well enough to donate. This assessment can take 18 weeks plus depending on the patient.

**Myth -11 It's against my religion to be a donor?**

**Fact.** All of the UK's major faiths including Buddhism, Roman Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism support organ donation and transplantation.

**Myth -12 Can I donate to my recipient if our blood groups do not match?**

**Fact.** Yes you can if this is possible. The living donor team would discuss this in detail with you and also discuss other transplant options/schemes available to them.

**Myth -13 If I donate will I experience financial difficulties, as I will not be able to work?**

**Fact.** No, there is a fund available for donors who have donated and any financial losses are reimbursed. The living donor team will discuss this with you.

**Myth -14 Can I donate my kidney to anyone?**

**Fact.** Yes we have an increased number of donors who have come forward to donate their kidney to benefit someone in need. These incredible 'altruistic donors' have really had an impact on people lives who are waiting for a kidney transplant. A lot of these donors participate in the National Living Donor Kidney Sharing Scheme, where because of their generosity the- 'gift of life' can assist in promoting more than one kidney transplant.

## **Living Kidney Donors**

Living donation is a way for people to receive a particular organ and/or tissue for transplants. Before you can become a living donor, we will carefully assess you to make sure:-

- It is safe for you to donate.
- The organ is suitable for the person receiving it.

Kidneys are the most common organ donated by a living person. About a third of all kidney transplants carried out in the UK are from living donors. A healthy person can lead a normal life with one working kidney.

## **Who patients should contact and talk to.**

If you would like further information, please contact:-

The Live kidney donor team on 0121 371 5845 and ask to speak to a living donor coordinator.

The Q.E also has a group of patients who are "Peer Supporters" who have experience in living transplantation and are able to meet and talk about the issues involved.

There is also information on our web site [www.kidneymatters.co.uk](http://www.kidneymatters.co.uk) which we hope will answer some of your questions.

You can also ask your Consultant when you have your next clinic appointment.

Recently a couple both in their early 80's, the husband donated a kidney to his wife. Both are doing very well.

**Think about it and don't hesitate to ask.**