

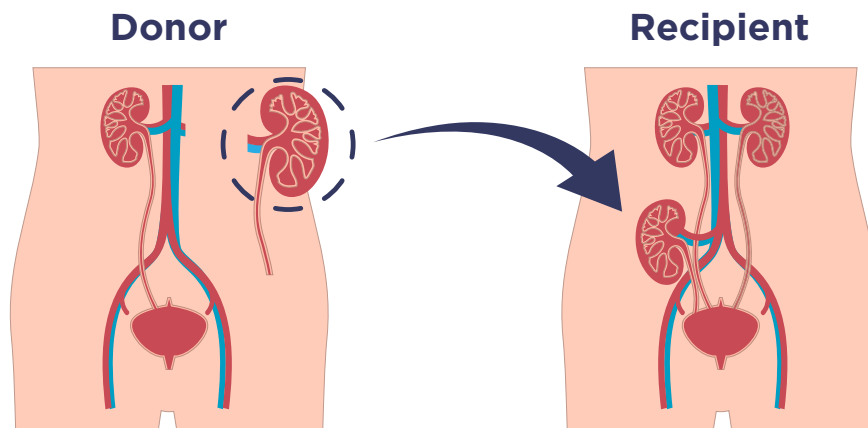
Kidney Transplantation



If a person has kidney failure (also called end-stage kidney disease, or ESKD), their kidneys stop working and can't remove water and waste from their body. Without working kidneys, a person can't live for long unless they start dialysis or receive a kidney transplant. This guide will explain the basics of kidney transplants.

What is a kidney transplant?

A person with healthy kidneys (a “donor”) can give, or donate, a kidney to a person (a “recipient”) whose kidneys are not working. This is called a kidney transplant. During surgery, the donor's kidney is placed in the recipient's abdomen (belly) and connected to their body. Kidney transplants are considered the best treatment for ESKD, but the waitlist for a transplant can be long, sometimes years. Many people need to start dialysis while waiting for a kidney transplant.



Who should talk to their kidney doctor (nephrologist) about a kidney transplant?

- People with advanced chronic kidney disease (CKD), including Stage 4 or 5 CKD
- People with ESKD on dialysis

Where does a donated kidney come from?

A kidney can come from a person who has recently passed away (a “deceased donor”) or from a living person (a “living donor”). All living donors must be tested to make sure they can safely donate a kidney.

What are the pros and cons of a kidney transplant?

The lists below show some of the pros and cons of kidney transplants. Talk to your doctor if you have questions about whether a transplant would be right for you.

Advantages of a Kidney Transplant	Disadvantages of a Kidney Transplant
• Long-term dialysis is no longer needed.	• As with any surgery, there is risk of pain, bleeding, or infection right after the procedure.
• People with kidney transplants usually live longer and feel better than those on dialysis.	• The new kidney may not work right away. This is more likely when the transplant is from a deceased donor.
• Compared to dialysis, there are fewer diet and fluid restrictions.	• The body may reject the new kidney. If this happens, dialysis may be needed.
• People with kidney transplants may have more free time than those on dialysis.	• People with transplants will need to take medications for the rest of their lives to prevent the body from rejecting the kidney.
• It is often easier to work or travel when not on dialysis.	• There is a risk of infection and side effects from transplant medications.



What should I do if I am interested in a kidney transplant?

1. Talk to your nephrologist about getting a transplant.
2. If your doctor thinks a transplant would work for you, they can refer you to a kidney transplant center. You will need to make an appointment at the transplant center for testing.
3. Go to your transplant evaluation and complete all the required testing. You may need to have many tests, such as blood and radiology studies. The testing can take months, but these studies will help your doctors know how to best care for you. Always follow your doctor's instructions when going through this process and keep all appointments.
4. Talk to your friends, family, and loved ones about living with kidney disease. Some people receive kidneys from family, friends, or even strangers.



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