



National Kidney Foundation®



Overcoming Common Kidney Donation Myths

Myth	Fact
The donor will have many out of pocket expenses	The medical costs are covered by the recipient's insurance. There are grants to apply for which can assist with some uncovered costs
Once a donor begins the donor evaluation process, s/he may feel obligated and afraid to change her/his mind	A donor can change their mind at any time
My religion prevents me from being a donor	Most religions support living donation
If a person does not offer to donate, that must mean s/he is not interested in donating	Many people don't know that living donation is an option
A donor will have trouble getting health insurance/life insurance after s/he donates	There are protections in place to ensure donors have appropriate access to care
Living kidney donors won't live a healthy life with just one kidney	Donors are carefully screened to ensure they are healthy and can have a nephrectomy. They are encouraged to have regular checkups and follow a healthy lifestyle
Living kidney donors live a shorter life	There is no evidence that donation shortens a lifespan
Living kidney donors are more likely to get kidney disease after donating	Donors are counseled about their individual risk associated with donation
Only younger people should be able to get a kidney transplant	All patients who are medically suitable are eligible for transplant



National Kidney Foundation®

Myth	Fact
Adults over age 50 can't donate	Donors must be healthy and can donate primarily on a basis of health, not age
Gay (homosexual) people and those with tattoos can't be living kidney donors	All donors are screened for medical and infectious diseases and are only cleared if it is safe for both the donor and recipient
A kidney donor can no longer participate in sports or exercise	A donor should be able to return to regular activities and exercise about 4 to 6 weeks after surgery
Kidney donors will have to take medications for the rest of their lives	Generally, prescriptions for pain and stool softeners will be necessary in the immediate postoperative period only
A kidney donor will have debilitating pain for an extended period of time	Ordinarily, there will be some pain after surgery, which will diminish and can be controlled with pain medication
A kidney donor will be on bed rest following surgery	A kidney donor will be out of bed and walking before discharge from the hospital
A kidney donor will be in the hospital for an extended period of time after surgery	A kidney donor will be hospitalized on average for 2 nights
Living kidney donors don't choose which person they want to donate their kidney to	A donor can select a person they know
A donor will have to follow a new diet plan following donation	A donor should eat a healthy, well-balanced diet, but there are no dietary restrictions
A donor can no longer consume alcohol following donation	While excessive alcohol use is always dangerous, a kidney donor can consume alcohol in moderation
A female donor should not get pregnant after donation	A female donor should wait to become pregnant until medically cleared after donation
A donor's sex life will be negatively affected by donation	Donors may engage in sexual activity when they feel well enough to do so