

A photograph of a man in a dark jacket and light-colored trousers carrying a young child on his shoulders. The child is wearing a red beanie and a grey jacket. They are walking through tall, golden-brown grass on a hillside. In the background, there is a beach and the ocean under a bright sky.

# Donating a kidney

What to expect

Emotional and

practical support

**This leaflet is for anyone considering donating a kidney to a relative, a friend or via paired donation. It tells you what is involved for donors before, during and after donation.**

The content has been put together with the input and support of those who have been through living kidney donation. Whilst it shouldn't replace valuable face-to-face meetings with members of your transplant team, it offers practical step-by-step guidance on the general investigations, procedures and checks. You can also use it to record your progress on your journey through donation. Please be aware that every kidney unit is different and the sequence of tests may vary.



Donating a kidney is a big decision and be sure to take up every opportunity to talk to members of the transplant team and to independent assessors about any fears or anxieties you may have.

In the UK only people over 18 years old can donate an organ and all potential donors must have medical and psychological checks to ensure that they are fit to donate. These stages are outlined throughout this leaflet.



### Talking to a counsellor

The counsellor's role is to explore concerns and anxieties, as well as talking about practical issues of reimbursement for loss of earnings, expenses and possible childcare needs.

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### Kidney function tests – blood tests

#### Measuring creatinine

Creatinine is produced naturally in our bodies and is removed by the kidneys. Measures are taken and if levels are high this shows that our kidneys are not working well.

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#### Glomerular filtration (GFR)

GFR is a measure that assesses the ability of the kidney to 'clear' the blood of particular substances.

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### ECG

This test is used to check that the heart is working well.

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### X-rays

A number of x-rays, including a chest x-ray and an x-ray of the kidneys may be taken.

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### Abdominal ultrasound

This scan checks the health of your kidneys and surrounding organs.

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# Donation

## Surgery

Your transplant surgeon will talk to you about the surgery. Keyhole surgery is generally used, but open surgery may occasionally be necessary.

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## After surgery

### Recovery time

You will need to spend 3–5 days in hospital for the operation. You may then need a further 3–8 weeks off work – depending on the type of surgery used and the type of work that you do.

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### Medication

If you need painkillers to take home, these will be supplied by the hospital pharmacist.

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### Sick note

If you are working, you can get a sick note from the hospital for your time in hospital and then from your GP once home.

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### Transport

It is important to arrange your transport home as you will need to wait at least 3–4 weeks before driving, to allow full healing.

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### Follow up appointments

You will be given an appointment with your surgeon approximately two weeks after surgery. You may have a number of blood tests to check your health and the surgical area will be checked.

You will then be given an appointment with your kidney doctor approximately six weeks after surgery and more blood and urine tests will be taken.

All donors continue to be assessed on an annual basis for life which will include blood tests. Donors may also like to continue regular check-ups with their GP.

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### Expenses

Donors will usually be reimbursed legitimate expenses to a level agreed by the local healthcare provider. You will be given an expense form to complete.

Donors may also be reimbursed for loss of earnings by their local healthcare provider and you may be given appropriate forms to complete for this.

Donors should check with their health and car insurance companies that premiums will not change.

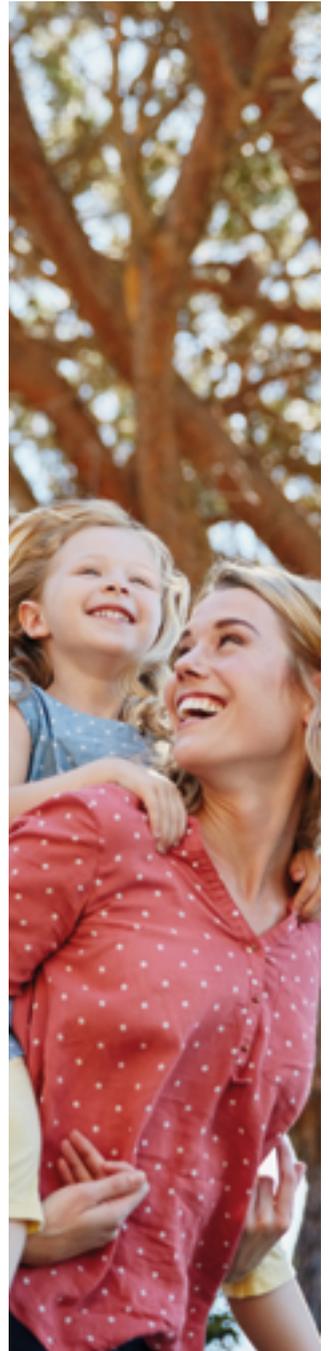
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**As mentioned earlier, not all the stages during donation will happen in the order listed.**

## How to find out more

If you would like to talk about the tests and assessments in more detail or you have any other questions, ask your Living Donor Transplant Team. They are always happy to help you during your journey through donating a kidney to save a life.



You can also find out more about organ donation from NHS Blood and Transplant. Visit [www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk)



**Kidney Care UK provides support, advice, counselling and financial help for kidney patients and their families.**

We fund the improvement of renal equipment, services and specialist staff. We also invest in research and help to influence government and NHS policy. To access our full range of services, please use the contact details below.

Visit our website at [www.kidneycareuk.org](http://www.kidneycareuk.org)  
Call us on **01420 541424**

Prepared by Kidney Care UK with support from renal transplant Coordinators at South West Thames Renal Unit as well as patients and their families.

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Formerly

**BRITISH KIDNEY**  
*Patient* ASSOCIATION  
*improving life for kidney patients*

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