

A KIDNEY FOR STONEY
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BENEFITS OF LIVING DONATION

Kidney transplants save and improve the lives of people with kidney failure. Kidney donation from deceased donors has not been able to keep up with the need for kidney transplants. Over 5,000 people die every year waiting for a kidney transplant.

Living kidney donation has revolutionized kidney transplantation and is now preferred when compared to a deceased donor transplant. Several benefits and advantages of living donation are now recognized:

- Living donation eliminates the recipient's need for placement on the national waiting list.
- Short and long term survival rates are significantly better for transplants from living donors than transplants from deceased donors. (On average, approximately 18 years for a kidney from a living donor compared to 13 years for a kidney from a deceased donor).
- The recipients knows the donor, his/her lifestyle choices and medical history
- Living donor kidneys almost always start functioning immediately, whereas deceased donor kidneys can take from a few days to a few weeks to start functioning. (Often called a Sleepy Kidney)
- Shortens the waiting time for others on the waiting list
- Health deteriorates the longer someone remains on dialysis
- A kidney transplant doubles the life expectancy compared to staying on kidney dialysis treatment.
- May be able to avoid being on dialysis
- The recipient has time to plan for the transplant
- Waiting for a deceased donor can be very stressful and unhealthy.
- The surgery can be scheduled at a mutually-agreed upon time rather than performed on an emergency basis.
- Perhaps the most important aspect of living donation is the psychological benefit. The recipient can experience positive feelings knowing that the gift came from a loved one or a caring stranger. The donor experiences the satisfaction of knowing that he or she has contributed to the improved health of the recipient.

There is little debate over the benefits of transplantation compared to being on kidney dialysis. Life expectancy figures comparing the two are surprising. A man between the ages of 40 – 45 could expect to live about 8 years on dialysis, if he were to receive a transplant, he could expect to live more than 20 years. Women who start dialysis between the ages of 55 – 59 could expect to live approx 5 years. However, they could live more than 16 years with a transplant, and someone's life would improve dramatically when they are not dependent on dialysis treatments.