

# Living Donation: Live to See What Your Gift Can Do

You may be surprised that many healthy adults can donate a kidney or a piece of their liver with minimal risk to themselves, while helping save the life of another person.

While most organ donors are deceased, some people can donate their organs while they are alive and well. Anyone considering living donation should understand the benefits, risks, and other considerations.

## Benefits of Living Donation

- Recipients of organs from living donors have even better health outcomes than those saved by deceased donors.
- As a living donor, you can choose who receives your organ – or you can donate to someone you don't know who's in need.
- You can reduce someone's wait time for a kidney or liver.

## Outcomes for Living Donors

- Most living donors go on to live healthy and active lives.
- Kidney donors typically stay 2 to 3 days in the hospital; liver donors can expect about a 5-day stay.
- Donors resume normal activities after donation recovery, which takes about 6 to 12 weeks (kidney) to 8 to 12 weeks (liver). Donors can live life as usual without special limitations or medications.
- Most donors report living donation as a positive emotional experience; they get to live to see the positive impact of their donation. And they tend to have similar or better quality of life than before the donation.

## Considerations

- Living donation is typically safe for the donor, but with surgery comes some medical risks, such as complications like pain or infection.
- Donors do not pay for medical costs because the recipient's insurance typically covers expenses. However, donors may face costs like lost wages, travel costs, or paying for child care. The good news is that there are financial assistance programs to help cover these costs.
- Recovery from surgery takes time, and donors may have to take off work and abstain from activities for a while.

## Who are living donors?

Everyday people like you. All it takes is a generous heart to help someone in need of a kidney or liver to live a longer life.

*"I had two kidneys. I gave away one...one healthy kidney...I did what I wanted to do and what I had to do as a husband," says Cesar. The kidney donor from Florida saved the life of his wife, Monica, with his living donation. Today, the former Marine is back to rowing every day and taking vacations with Monica.*



## Did You Know?

People have two kidneys, but one is enough to keep a normal, healthy body going strong.

When a donor gives part of their liver, the part they keep and the part they donate both regrow to full size.



The body's remarkable ability to adapt makes giving while living possible.  
**Learn more about living donation at [organdonor.gov](https://www.organdonor.gov).**

