Paired Kidney Donor Program
A Chance to Save Two Lives at Once
A New Way to Give the Gift of Life

Kidney transplantation saves lives. The average patient with end-stage renal disease will live 10 years longer if he or she receives a kidney transplant instead of staying on dialysis.

Living donation creates the optimal environment for kidney transplantation. Kidneys from living donors typically function an average of 15.5 years, twice as long as a deceased donor kidney. But approximately one third of all willing kidney donors have an incompatible blood type with their intended recipient.

A living donor paired exchange can save two lives at once. At Baylor, an innovative approach to kidney transplantation allows two patients to receive a compatible kidney while their willing donors can fulfill their desire to donate.

It is estimated that paired donation will one day allow for an additional 3,000 transplants per year. Of all the advances in renal transplantation in the last 25 years, paired donation has the greatest potential to extend the lives of patients who have kidney disease.

How It Works

Paired kidney donation matches one incompatible donor/recipient pair to another pair in the same situation. The donor of the first pair gives his or her kidney to the recipient of the second pair, and vice versa. In other words, the pairs swap kidneys so that their loved ones can still receive a kidney.

To achieve paired donation transplantation, two incompatible donor/recipient pairs (pair 1 and pair 2) must be identified. The donor of pair 1 must be identified to be compatible with the recipient of pair 2. The donor of pair 2 must be identified to be compatible with the recipient of pair 1. This allows each paired recipient to receive a kidney transplant.
The Procedure for Paired Donation

Paired donor transplantation requires that multiple potential pairings be evaluated and tested to allow a transplant to occur.

If you are a patient in need of kidney and you have one or more willing but incompatible living kidney donors, you may be eligible to participate in the paired kidney donation program at Baylor. In this program, you will join the Alliance for Paired Donation registry where a computer database is used to find other registered pairs who may be a match for you and your donor.

At Baylor, you and your willing donor will be asked to provide a detailed medical history, as well as undergo a number of medical tests. On a regular basis, the computer program will search for other incompatible pairs who may be a match for you. If the computer finds a potential match, a team of physicians on the medical staff of Baylor will determine whether or not to proceed with more advanced medical testing.

Living Donation

Making a living kidney donation is an unselfish act that literally saves someone's life. If you are considering donating a kidney to your loved one, you should be between the ages of 18 and 75 without any of the following conditions: high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, or kidney, heart, liver or lung disease. Kidney donation is a serious decision, and you should weigh the risks and benefits carefully. While the procedure is safe, as with any surgery, there are risks.

If you decide to proceed, blood tests will be done to rule out any viruses, and tissue typing to allow for precise matching. You will also need to have urine tests, and if you are over a certain age, tests to rule out certain common forms of cancer. After the first phase of testing is done, and assuming your results are normal, you will also need to have heart tests, X-rays, and an evaluation by a transplant surgeon on the medical staff of Baylor.

Once it is determined that both pairs are able to undergo surgery, a date will be set for the operation at Baylor. In traditional paired exchanges, the surgeries happen on the same day at approximately the same time possibly at different locations.

All those involved will be asked prior to surgery whether or not they would like to meet the other pairs involved. If everyone agrees, a meeting will be arranged. If any one of you does not want to meet, every attempt will be made to respect your privacy, but chance encounters in the waiting room may not be avoidable.

Recovery times for the donors and recipients will vary, but typically, most donors will be in the hospital two to seven days (depending on the type of surgery performed). Donors may return to work within four to six weeks or less. Generally, there are no long-term problems, although as with any surgery, complications can occur.
About

The Annette C. and Harold C. Simmons Transplant Institute

The Annette C. and Harold C. Simmons Transplant Institute, established 25 years ago, is a recognized world leader in comprehensive transplant science and practice. The Institute integrates the transplant services of Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas and Baylor All Saints Medical Center at Fort Worth. In terms of volume, the transplant programs at Baylor Dallas and Baylor Fort Worth are among the top programs in the United States.

You can give and receive the gift of life.

Paired donation may increase your chance for a kidney transplant. To investigate your eligibility for the paired donor exchange program, call 214-358-2300. For more information about transplantation services at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas and Baylor All Saints Medical Center at Fort Worth, call 1.800.4BAYLOR or visit BaylorHealth.com/Transplant.