



Live Kidney Donation: Medical Toolkit

CHAPTER • 5

Kidney donation for people with pre-diabetes

Can I be a kidney donor if I have pre-diabetes?

Maybe. Pre-diabetes means your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diabetes.

To qualify as a kidney donor, you'll first need to make changes to try to lower your blood sugar. This may prevent your pre-diabetes from turning into diabetes.

Why is pre-diabetes a problem for kidney donation?

Pre-diabetes is a problem for kidney donors because:

- Pre-diabetes may turn into diabetes unless you can lower your blood sugar level
- Diabetes (especially type 2 diabetes) can cause kidney disease and is the most common reason for kidney failure in the United States

UNOS, the organization responsible for organ donation in the U.S., will not allow people with diabetes to donate.

How can doctors tell if I'm healthy enough to donate a kidney?

To see if you're healthy enough to donate a kidney, you'll have a donor evaluation. The evaluation is a series of tests doctors do to check your overall health and make sure there aren't any problems that would keep you from donating.

To see if you have diabetes or pre-diabetes, doctors will:

- Ask about your family medical history, since diabetes can run in families
- Check your weight and age



What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a problem of high blood sugar (glucose). Too much blood sugar can lead to serious health problems throughout your body.

Learn more about diabetes and how it harms kidneys at: https://www.kidney.org/atoz/atozTopic_Diabetes

- Test your blood for high levels of blood sugar and higher than normal hemoglobin A1c, which are signs of diabetes and pre-diabetes

What happens if tests show I have pre-diabetes?

If your blood sugar level is higher than 110mg/dl, it means you have pre-diabetes.

1. Doctors will help you find ways to make lifestyle changes to lower your blood sugar, such as:
 - Change your eating habits
 - Lose weight
 - Add exercise to your daily life

You'll need to keep doing these lifestyle changes for the rest of your life.

2. After you've made these lifestyle changes, doctors will retest your blood sugar and let you know if you're healthy enough to donate.



Live Kidney Donation: Medical Toolkit

CHAPTER • 5

- If your blood sugar level is within normal range, you might be able to donate a kidney
- If your blood sugar level is still high, you may not be able to donate – especially if you are young and have many years ahead when diabetes may develop

How can I learn more about my chance of getting diabetes?

You can talk to your doctor or go to the American Diabetes Association website, at www.diabetes.org

References

1. USRDS accessed at http://www.usrds.org/2015/view/v2_01.aspx
2. UNOS donor evaluation policy accessed at http://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/ContentDocuments/OPTN_Policies.pdf#nameddest=Policy_14
3. Chandran, S., Masharani, U., Webber, A. B. & Wojciechowski, D. M. Prediabetic living kidney donors have preserved kidney function at 10 years after donation. *Transplantation* **97**, 748–754 (2014)
4. Heikes KE, Eddy DM, Arondekah B, Schlessinger L. Diabetes Risk Calculator: A simple tool for detecting undiagnosed diabetes and pre-diabetes. *Diabetes Care*, 2008; 31: 1040–1045.

Note: This information is the opinion of the Living Donor Community of Practice (LDCOP) of the American Society of Transplantation. The LDCOP is a group of health care professionals and researchers who specialize in living kidney donation. The LDCOP's recommendations are meant to offer you helpful information, but you may find opinions from other groups or organizations that are helpful to you, too.