Donor to Donor

A shared experience about organ donation

Roche Transplantation, your partner in patient education

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Organ Donation

The Most Selfless Gift You Can Give

Donating an organ to someone in need is one of the noblest gestures anyone can make. There's no way for you to be repaid for the sacrifice you're making, and no way to guarantee your gift will produce the results everyone hopes for. But positive thoughts and a good attitude are critical to the journey you may be thinking about making. They can definitely make a difference.

Knowing this and going forward with organ donation is an act of bravery and generosity that not everyone is capable of. People may call you a "hero," wondering if they could do what you have decided to do. Before you donate, your transplant team will discuss all necessary information, including risks. If you choose to donate, the hospital staff will provide strong support, knowing your gift means an offer of life. Your family and friends will become part of the experience by helping you during your recovery.

However, no one can describe what the donor experience is like better than those who have already been there. The following touching stories—although not necessarily representative of your situation—offer great insights into the challenges and triumphs of three extraordinary people who committed to giving the gift of life.

A True Love Connection

"The transplant center just called, and they said we were a perfect match."

Laura Riojas-Noriega
San Antonio, Texas

To tell their story, you need to go back to 1993, when Laura and Ruben were first dating. They were in their early 20s and figured they had a beautiful life ahead of them. What they couldn't have known was that Ruben would be diagnosed with polycystic kidney disease (PKD). In PKD, fluid-filled cysts grow inside the kidneys, taking up so much room that the kidneys can't function the way they should. After a number of years, the disease causes the kidneys to fail, and dialysis or a kidney transplant is necessary for the person to survive.

Ruben's doctor told him that he would monitor the course of his disease, but that a kidney transplant was definitely in his future. The couple was devastated, but they went on with their lives and got married. “I think I lived in denial the whole time,” Laura admitted. Ten years after his diagnosis, Ruben’s doctor told him, “Okay, you’re really getting close to being on dialysis. I think we need to start looking for some possible donors to avoid putting you on dialysis.” Laura and Ruben were crushed to hear this news—their world was suddenly turned upside down.

Ruben went to the transplant center to be tested to see if he was a good candidate for a transplant. “I told him, ‘Don’t worry about it, I’ll take care of it,’ meaning I would give him one of my kidneys,” Laura said. Ruben had responded, “Come on. What are the odds that you would be a match?”

“As he was getting his blood drawn at the hospital,” Laura recalled, “I said, ‘I want to do this. Let me do it.’ He joked with the nurse, and said, ‘Oh, she wants to give some blood too.’ And the nurse said, ‘That’s great. Let’s set it up.’ That’s where it all began for us,” Laura said proudly.

An Unexpected—But Perfect—Match

Ruben had a brother who also was tested, because the possibility of a good match is usually greater with siblings. Unfortunately, the brother was eliminated as a donor candidate halfway through the process. So the pressure was on. “While we waited for my results days later,” Laura said, “I kept telling him, ‘It’s going to be me. I just know it!’ I remember the phone ringing one day and Ruben answered it. He was walking toward me with this look on his face and said, ‘The transplant center just called, and they said we were a perfect match.’ I said, ‘Oh, yeah, I knew that.’ It was great to know that we were finally going to be doing something, because when you see your loved one in that condition, you feel helpless. Our families were very supportive and that helped a lot.”

“I went through all the necessary physical and emotional pre-transplant screening. And then we were able to pick a date,” Laura remembered. “It was in December, right around

Laura and Ruben enjoying a well-deserved vacation.

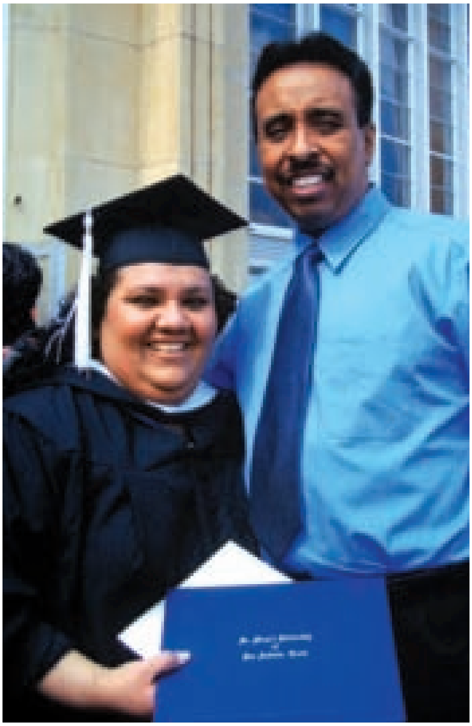
Christmas. The transplant center was really good about preparing us for everything. They talked to us and answered all my questions. I must have driven the transplant coordinator crazy with every possible question I could think of. We prepared as much as we could, but, of course, it was a very scary time for us. I think it would have helped if we could have talked to someone who had already gone through it, but that wasn't a possibility at the time."

The day of the surgery finally arrived and Laura went in first. "All I remember is waking up and asking for Ruben," she explained. "They said he was fine and the kidney started working as soon as they put it in. I was so happy and then I just fell back to sleep. When I finally saw him, he looked wonderful. I mean, his color was perfect. He looked like a kid on Christmas morning. It was remarkable. The transplant team had told us that usually the recipient does not realize how sick he or she was until after they receive the new organ. That was definitely the case with Ruben. As for me, I had some pain but it was, of course, due to surgery. I think I actually surprised myself. By the next morning, I was up and walking, although I was not as fast as Ruben was," Laura said.

Fate Steps In Once Again

When the transplant team came in to see how she was doing, they shared some surprising information with her: When they removed her kidney for donation, they noticed it had an aneurysm, which was not found by any of the pre-surgical tests. They explained that without this accidental—and fortunate—discovery, Laura would have gotten sick eventually, and could have lost the kidney. “So, they repaired it, gave it to Ruben, and it’s doing great,” Laura said. What happened with Laura’s kidney was the result of a genetic inheritance from her mother, who had suffered the same medical problem. Laura recalled when she was a little girl, her mother was admitted to the hospital to have the diseased kidney removed. “My mom has lived with one kidney and she’s done well. She has always had checkups and taken good care of herself. It’s strange how things happen for a reason,” Laura reflected.

“I stayed in the hospital for three or four days and was released. It was hard going home without Ruben, but he had to stay for a week because they were having trouble controlling his blood pressure. They finally brought it down and stabilized it so he was able to leave the hospital.” Laura recalls how scared she was when Ruben was released with prescriptions for many medicines, which had to be taken every day. All she could think of was that their life was going to be so different.



Laura proudly displays her Master’s Degree in Art and Community Counseling.

Yet they realized it was a small price to pay for how far they had come.

Meeting Challenges Together

The time they spent home together recovering was filled with unforeseen challenges. For example, they had to switch from their accustomed sides in bed to be more comfortable, due to where their surgical stitches were located. "We had to make sure we didn't roll into each other in our sleep," Laura explained. Meanwhile, Ruben continued to gain energy and feel healthier.

> ***"I think it finally sunk in—I had one kidney. It was like a loss for me, but I felt guilty even thinking like that."***

Laura began to experience a range of different emotions, just as the social worker had predicted prior to the transplant surgery. "I think it finally sunk in—I had one kidney," Laura recalled wistfully. "It was like a loss for me, but I felt guilty even thinking like that. The social worker had said that it's normal when you see how well the other person is doing; all those feelings will hit you. And so, I finally told myself that it was okay to feel that way. I just talked myself through what I was feeling. The whole time, I focused on wanting Ruben to get better. After all that, you do work through it."

A Shared Kidney and Shared Emotions

Ruben now likes to joke that since he received Laura's kidney they are really related. "There may be something to that because since the surgery, my husband has also become quite emotional," Laura confided. "In fact, when we see Hallmark commercials, we pass the tissues back and forth. I tell Ruben it's because he has a girl kidney. We are also finding it funny that Ruben is now craving foods that I love. For instance, he was never a big burger person and I always loved them.

Now, that's what he loves to eat! The doctor explained that when two people go through such a traumatic experience, it's only natural for their bond to grow stronger and their connection to become deeper."

Right after the surgery, Laura and Ruben, aware of how weak Ruben's immune system still was, stayed away from congested public places. They asked their families to understand that Ruben could not come in contact with anyone who was ill. They have had a few medical scares since then, but today, Ruben is doing well. He goes for his regular medical checkups and his life is back to normal.

"My surgery was laparoscopic with three or four incisions. The incision at the site where they actually took the kidney out, I really can't even see anymore. The major one was on the belly button, but I forget unless I look down, and then I say, 'Oh, wow. That seems like such a long time ago,' especially since the surgery was in December 2003," Laura said.

Laura and Ruben out celebrating their new life together.

"I worked as an accounts payable assistant and was able to go back after three weeks. I wasn't moving as fast as I was used to, but I was fine," she continued. "I was driving and don't recall having a hard time at all. I get my annual physicals and they check everything. Just as the transplant coordinator instructed me, I try to watch my diet and eat healthy, exercise and drink plenty of water." Laura says that getting to meet and talk to other families who had gone through the same experience helped them cope. "We tried to look for a support group but there wasn't one around," Laura remembered. "We actually tried to start one, but only got one response, and that was from someone who worked with Ruben. His wife was having a transplant. So, we were able to talk to each other; we really, really tried to start a group but it never got off the ground."

Organ Donation—The Rewards Are Endless

To those people who may be considering organ donation, Laura offers this advice: "You know, I talk about it not just because it's our story, but because I believe that organ donation is so important. I always tell people that we did it, we're here, and we are fine. It is absolutely the gift of life. Today, when I look at Ruben, I get choked up, especially when I think about when he was starting to get sicker and how he struggled. And then, right after the surgery, to see how well he was doing made it all worth it. It was so worth it."

The couple has already gone through a lot in their young lives. Laura, 34, and Ruben, 37, are now getting back to living the lives they put on hold. Laura says, "Our lives are finally back to normal. We still do the same things we did before. We love to travel. And now we're hoping to start a family, and we're really looking forward to that next chapter."

She concludes, "I don't think there's a day that's gone by that we're not relieved that we got through it. Ruben is absolutely doing wonderfully. He's a wonderful man, and even if I wasn't married to him, I would still do it all over again."

This is one patient's story. Your experience may differ. Be sure to discuss all the risks and benefits of transplant surgery with your doctor.

Paired Donation: A Unique Transplant Option Makes It a Very Small World

The two couples had seen each other many times in their home area but never knew that their lives would someday be intertwined.

Christie Stoia
Bloomfield, New Jersey

This incredible story begins in 1991 when Tony Stoia was diagnosed with high blood pressure. His medicine was being changed about every three months because his doctor was having a difficult time finding the right medication to control the problem. As a result, Tony was having bad headaches but was still able to function and go to work. The right combination of medications was eventually determined. Everything was fine, or so the Stoias thought, for 13 years.

In 2004, Tony went for his regular medical checkup, as he did every year, and had all the routine tests done. Three days later, Christie got a call at work from Tony's doctor. He told her that the test results indicated that Tony's creatinine clearance level was so high that he was in kidney failure. He needed to go to the hospital as soon as possible so he could receive emergency kidney dialysis. Christie was in total disbelief, saying to herself, "How could Tony be sick? He didn't look sick or feel sick." She called Tony at work in New York City and calmly told him about her conversation with the doctor, asking him to come home on the next train. Tony was shocked; he had no obvious symptoms. How could this be possible?

The Stoias' World Turns Upside Down

When the Stoias arrived at the hospital, Tony was rushed into surgery to implant a port in his neck to hook up to the dialysis machine. Christie was told by the doctors that they were surprised at Tony's lack of symptoms for someone who was so sick with kidney disease. He was initially stabilized, but two weeks later, he became very sick and his body started filling with fluid and his coloring changed. He was constantly very tired, but he still went to work.

Tony began receiving dialysis through an artery in his arm. Christie said, "It was very difficult, but we had to keep going. We had three teenage sons, I had a full-time job, and Tony had to go to work every day because he was carrying the medical insurance through his job. Three days a week, I would take him to the dialysis center by 6:00 PM, and sometimes he wouldn't be done until 11:30 PM. Sometimes, while I waited for him, I would just go to the park and cry." Christie asked about donating a kidney to Tony, but she knew she had a different blood type. They didn't know where to turn.

Christie, Tony and their three teenage sons (left to right): Joe, Anthony and Chris.

Learning About Paired Donation

In talking to a friend of hers who knew of someone going through a similar experience, Christie learned about a new type of organ donation program called paired donation or paired exchange. This program enables donor/recipient pairs who don't match each other to exchange organs with other donor/recipient pairs who are a match. The donor from each group is matched and able to give his or her organ to the recipient of the other pair. Christie felt a glimmer of hope, deciding that she would investigate whether Tony could benefit from such a program. In February 2005, they attended an orientation program about paired donation at the local transplant center. She signed up immediately. Now all they had to do was wait for the call that a compatible pair had been found.

Five months passed. In July 2005, Tony woke up at 2:30 in the morning gasping for air. Christie recalled, “He was turning blue. He had congestive heart failure. I called the ambulance. When we got to the hospital, they told me to prepare for the worst. He had gone into a coma.” Miraculously, Tony awoke from the coma by 6:00 that evening. “They didn’t know how. They didn’t know why,” Christie remembered. “I went in there, held his hand and kept yelling at him, ‘Wake up, we’re not done yet.’ I had known him for 30 years, and we’d been together since I was 19. I was not about to let this happen.”

A Match Is Made

After this episode, Christie determined that paired donation was the best option. Two months later, they received a phone call: out of 50 possibilities, a matched pair had been found. At the time, they were told nothing about the other donor and recipient. Christie went for all her pre-screening evaluations and was told what to expect from the laparoscopic procedure she would undergo to have her kidney removed. “They told me about the pain, the medication, and how long I would be in the hospital,” Christie said. “I sat with a social worker, whose job it was to make sure I was emotionally prepared. It was very much about the donor at that point. There was no doubt that I was getting the best care that I could.”

Surgery was scheduled for December 28. Tony developed pneumonia during the Thanksgiving holiday; they were terrified that the transplant might not take place due to the illness. “But, he did it. He did it again. Tony got well enough in time, and they said, ‘Everything’s a go,’” Christie said.

The night before the surgery, she sat down with her children and explained why she was donating her kidney. The children were worried for their parents but understood their love and commitment. When Christie woke up from surgery, all she wanted to know was how Tony was doing. They were in the same recovery area. Christie asked a nurse, “Please tell him to just wiggle his feet just to let me know he’s okay.” The nurse asked her, “Well, how do *you* feel?” Christie answered, “It doesn’t matter. I need to see his feet move.” The next thing she knew, Tony wiggled his feet and she fell back to sleep, knowing that he was okay. They were able to share the same hospital room, which helped their recovery.

Tony’s Health Is Restored

“They told me the surgery was a success. I found out that it was a young man who received my kidney, and he was doing better than they expected,” Christie said proudly. Her husband’s new kidney started working immediately. She said it was amazing to see his color change so drastically for the better in just two days. She was surprised to discover that, “All of a sudden he was starving. He was thirsty. I went in healthy and came out not feeling as well as he was. The transplant team prepared me for this, but they weren’t kidding.”

Tony in December 2006.

The surgery took place on a Wednesday, and Christie was able to go home two days later. Tony came home that Sunday. Christie remembered that, “He came home zipping through the house, while I was on my back. I looked at him and said, 'Are you kidding me?' He then told me he was hungry and asked me if I wanted some pancakes. 'No,' I said, 'You never even liked pancakes. I'm lying here and you're running all over the place.' All Tony could do was laugh. And the funny thing is, from that day on, the man has had an obsession for pancakes, pancake syrup and cinnamon buns, and we didn't know why until three months later."

After their recovery at home, Christie went back to her job in the cosmetics department of a local pharmacy. She returned to work after seven weeks, and Tony went back exactly three months after his surgery.

Making Medical History

In March 2006, the Stoias finally met the other transplant pair. Janet was the donor for Tony, and her 24-year-old son, Gary, had received Christie's kidney. One of the most interesting facts about their story is that this event was the first paired donation organ transplant in the state of New Jersey. As it turned out, Janet and Gary live in the next town to Christie and Tony, and Gary went to high school with the Stoias' oldest son. Talk about a small world!

This event was the first paired donation organ transplant in the state of New Jersey.

When they sat down to get acquainted, Christie asked, "Janet, do you like pancakes?" She responded, "I love them. Sometimes we even eat them for dinner." Christie said, "Oh, no, so do we. You must have passed that on to Tony." Prior to their shared, life-changing experience, the two couples had seen each other many times in their home area but never knew that their lives would someday be intertwined.

Today, Tony is doing much better. As Christie puts it, "He's glowing. He's gotten his sense of humor back. His blood pressure is under control. He's gaining weight. I feel like we've met again for the first time." They are still very careful about Tony being in the company of people who are sick. They ask friends and family to understand the necessity to keep their house healthy and as germ-free as possible.

The Celebration of a Lifetime

The Stoias had missed celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary because Tony had been hospitalized with pneumonia. They had promised themselves a big celebration when their ordeal was finally over. In December 2006, Christie recalled, "We had a great affair. We had 50 people and my sons gave a wonderful speech. There were lots of pictures. And people who had not seen Tony in a while thought he looked incredible. We even took a second honeymoon in Florida. Now, we eat healthy and go to the gym three times a week."

The Stoias celebrate their postponed 25th wedding anniversary.

Tony offers these thoughts: “I have a new perspective on life. It’s too short. If my wife and I want to go somewhere, we’re going!” Christie adds, “It’s a whole new life, another chance. I don’t worry about the little things anymore. Sure, I worry about my son who just started driving. But, I’m not worried if I don’t get to the laundry. If Tony wants to go to the movies and I need to clean the bathroom, we go to the movies.”

Christie is so grateful that she found out about the paired-donation program. She urges everyone to do all that they can to educate themselves on the possibilities available to people in similar situations. “I believe in this program,” she stated firmly. “In fact, *In Touch Weekly* magazine did a story on us. I was so happy because a lot of people don’t know about this program, and this was a great way to get it out there. Since the story was published, people have recognized us and come up to us to say how moved they were.” Christie offered this final observation: “We’re not talking about sharing money. We’re talking about sharing a part of you. It’s not a difficult decision. It’s really not—all you have to do is look into your heart.”

Christie and Tony on their second honeymoon in Florida.

This is one patient’s story. Your experience may differ. Be sure to discuss all the risks and benefits of transplant surgery with your doctor.

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A Little Sister With a Big Heart *and* a Big Liver

"The whole donation process was a phenomenal experience because you learn more about yourself than you could ever imagine."

Bonnie Haase
Redding, Connecticut

"Jon had always been my pesky older brother and I loved him, but I never realized how much I would do for him until I was actually put to the test," Bonnie observed. In 1979, when Jon was 20 years old, he had surgery to remove a lump from his thyroid gland. While he was in the hospital, he developed what the doctors thought was mononucleosis, but it turned out to be an acute attack of hepatitis.

Every two to three years over the next 18 years, Jon would have a recurrence of hepatitis and would become jaundiced and very debilitated. His body would start to shut down and it would take him about six months to recover. “So, for the better part of his adult life, Jon was sick in some way, shape or form, with what they called cryptogenic hepatitis,” his sister recalled. “He had chronic hepatitis attacks, but they just didn’t know what was causing them. You just have to know my brother to appreciate how debilitating this disease was for him. He loves life. He leads a clean life, doesn’t even take aspirin when he has a headache. He doesn’t drink caffeine, and his big vices are chocolate and sweets. He never drank, smoked or did drugs. It was really a mystery to everybody that something like this could ever happen to him.”

When Jon turned 35, his doctor told him that he needed to go on the transplant list because his liver was starting to scar, which was causing his condition to deteriorate. Bonnie said, “Then, in the fall of 2001, Jon’s doctor talked to him about doing a living donor transplant. He said, ‘Given your state of health and the number of people on the waiting list for a liver, it is a new option that’s out there and would be a good alternative to consider.’ This put the wheels in motion for us and since I’m Jon’s only living full-blood relative, I just knew what I had to do.”

Bonnie Gives a Special Gift

Jon discussed the doctor’s suggestion with Bonnie, but kept telling her that it was just an option and, if at any time she wanted to opt out, it was ok. But Bonnie had already made up her mind. At this point, both siblings were married, but only Jon had children. Bonnie was concerned that Jon’s family had so much to lose if something happened to him. She said, “He had three beautiful children who needed him and, personally, it was a totally different situation for me. Yes, I was married and I had a job, but there was just no way I could not try and do something for him. My reaction was, ‘Absolutely. What is it we’ve got to do? Do you just need a liver, or do you need a kidney, too?’”

Jon and Bonnie in May 2003, 10 months post-surgery.

Around Thanksgiving, Bonnie met with the doctor for a preliminary discussion about living liver donation. She met with the transplant team six months later in May 2002 for some of the pre-screening tests. The surgery was scheduled for the fall of 2002 to give Jon time to make himself strong and in shape over the summer so he'd be able to bounce back quicker after the transplant.

However, his body didn't want to cooperate. Jon collapsed in early June and was admitted to the hospital with a 105° fever. He had blood poisoning and his body was shutting down. As Bonnie recalled, "He was actively dying and I thought we had to fast-track this whole process. So, I spent the next six weeks going through all the necessary testing to get clearance for the surgery. I had lots of blood drawn, a liver biopsy, CAT scans, EKGs, psychological exams, meetings with a social worker and many other tests. The surgery finally took place on July 22nd. I guess you could say it was a true six-week sprint."

"My reaction was, 'Absolutely. What is it we've got to do? Do you just need a liver, or do you need a kidney, too?'"

Little Sister, Big Liver

Right before the transplant, while they were completing the last of the pre-surgical tests, the surgeons confirmed that Bonnie was a great match because her liver was going to be big enough for Jon. Bonnie explained, "You know, it's not just the matching of all tests and being perfectly healthy, it's the size and structure of the liver that also needs to be right. My brother is 6′7″—that's a big guy—and the doctors were hoping my liver would be big enough and anatomically compatible so they could take a substantial portion to support his body. I'm 5′10″ and it seems I had an unusually large liver for a female, and it definitely worked to our advantage." Better yet, the CAT scan that was taken as part of her one-year follow-up checkup showed that Bonnie's liver had grown back in size so that it almost looked like she never even had the operation.

Jon with Bonnie at her one-year post-transplant checkup.

Recovery for Bonnie was a challenge. The first few days were painful, and she felt very disoriented due to the medication she was taking. But she was prepared because the transplant coordinator had told her what to expect and how she might feel at every stage of the recovery process. She was also told that it might seem strange seeing her brother up and walking around in a couple of days, while she would not feel like getting out of bed for a month. That's exactly what happened, Bonnie said. "Jon would come down to my room, full of energy and want to go walking with me. I told him, 'No way could I do that yet.' He was feeling better, because before the surgery only 10% of his liver was functioning; the rest of it had atrophied. Believe it or not, his new liver doubled in size within a month after the transplant!"

The surgery was on a Monday, and the staff had Bonnie up and out of bed on Thursday. She was able to go home nine days after the operation, but had to go back into the hospital three days later due to an infection from the surgical drain site. Ironically, the room to which she was admitted was the same room that Jon had just left. Bonnie said that it gave her comfort to be there. Within a half-hour of her arrival, a hospital staffer came in with a get-well card for Jon but he had already been discharged. All Bonnie could do was smile and say she would deliver it to him in person.

The CAT scan that was taken as part of her one-year follow-up checkup showed that Bonnie's liver had grown back in size.

Jon Gets Back Into Life

Jon was doing great. Bonnie recalled, "He went from eating less

Jon and Bonnie in Maine.

than his four-year-old daughters before the surgery to eventually eating six meals a day. He was eating eggs, and he doesn't even like eggs. He was just like a kid in a candy shop, and it was amazing to see."

"I was home recovering for 11 weeks," Bonnie remembered. "Life was kind of a blur. I was somewhat distracted and couldn't focus because I was on medication, and my body was working hard to recover from the surgery. The healing process was slow. I didn't get depressed or frustrated because I knew I had done the right thing, and I could see Jon was getting better every day. After a month, I started to feel better and then it just continued that way. I went back to my job as a human resource director for General Electric on a part-time schedule and I was full-time by three months. I kept telling myself, ‘Every day that goes by is one day in the right direction.’”

> *He looked healthy, had put on weight and his color was excellent. The doctors were thrilled with how responsive his new liver was.*

Jon continued to thrive. At their three-month checkup, Bonnie said she did a double-take because she could barely recognize him. He looked healthy, had put on weight and his color was excellent. The doctors were thrilled with how responsive his new liver was.

That was in July 2002. Bonnie and Jon are both doing well. Bonnie said, “I’ve told Jon that I’m keeping my kidneys healthy for him just in case, and all he needs to do is ask. I’d do it again in a New York minute. The whole donation process was a phenomenal experience because you learn more about yourself than you could ever imagine. As I reflect on this life-changing experience, I feel blessed for the bond between us and have learned to truly believe in Jon’s motto, ‘Enjoy every day. It is not a dress rehearsal. In the end, it’s not the years in life, but the life in the years.’”

This is one patient’s story. Your experience may differ. Be sure to discuss all the risks and benefits of transplant surgery with your doctor.

What You Need to Know About the Possible Risks Associated With Organ Donation

Should you decide that organ donation is something you want to do, your doctors and transplant coordinator will work with you during the entire process to keep you informed about what to expect, and they will provide you with the most complete information possible. They will help you fully understand the important risks involved in donating an organ—some are specific to either kidney or liver donation. Even though you must be in good health to donate, there is always a possibility of complications as with any surgery. Some of these may include:

- *An allergic reaction to the anesthesia*
- *Pneumonia*
- *Blood clots in the lung*
- *Infection of the wound or urinary tract*
- *Bleeding—rarely, a blood transfusion is needed*
- *Death—the rate of this happening is low*

Even with the risks and sacrifice involved, most donors are positive about their decision and say it is one of the most important things they have ever done. Remember, the transplant team is there for you and will discuss any issues or answer any questions you may have.

Important Resources

The following is a partial list of where you can turn for support, information and education.

American Transplant Association (ATA)

1-800-494-4527
www.americantransplant.org

Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA)

1-800-366-2682
www.cota.org

Donate Life

www.organdonor.gov

Living Donors *Online!*

www.livingdonorsonline.org

Living Organ Donor.org

www.livingorgandonor.org

MedlinePlus

www.nlm.nih.gov

National Foundation for Transplants (NFT)

1-800-489-3863
www.transplants.org

National Kidney Foundation

1-800-622-9010
www.kidney.org

Transplant Living

1-888-894-6361
www.transplantliving.org

Transplant Recipients International Organization (TRIO)

1-800-874-6386
www.trioweb.org

TransWeb

1-734-998-7314
www.transweb.org

United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS)

1-888-894-6361
www.unos.org

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