

Living Kidney Donors from Outside of Canada

What you need to know

If you live outside of Canada, it is possible for you to donate a kidney to a family member or friend who lives in Ontario. The process has a few more steps when the kidney donor lives outside of Canada. This pamphlet tells you what you need to know.

You need to pay for some costs. The Ontario government may pay you back for some of them.

- The Ontario government, through the Trillium Gift of Life Network, may pay for some of your expenses through a program called PRELOD – Program for Reimbursing Expenses of Living Organ Donors. You pay for the travel up front and apply to the program to get money back. You need to save all travel receipts to apply for reimbursement.
- Once you are in Ontario for the living donation process, the cost of tests, the surgery, and your hospital stay are paid for through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) of the person who will receive your kidney.

Other things for you to consider:

- You need to see a doctor to do blood and urine tests before you come to Canada. These tests have to be paid for by you or by the health insurance in your country if they are covered. If you live near a transplant centre in your home country, an Ontario living kidney donor evaluation team may arrange for you to have some tests and appointments done closer to home before travelling to Canada.
- How well do you read and speak English? If English is a challenge for you, it may be hard to get information before you get to Ontario. Once you are in Ontario, the living kidney donor program will arrange an interpreter for your appointments with the healthcare team.
- Is there a kidney doctor who can give you care when you return to your home country or province? You need to have a yearly checkup with a doctor after kidney donation surgery.
- Can you afford to pay for a flight to come to Ontario and wait to be paid back after the surgery?
- Can you get a visa to travel to Canada? Check with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to find out about visa applications.
- Once you are in Canada, expect that you will need more medical tests before the living kidney donor program can finally decide whether you can become a kidney donor.

Steps for a donor living outside of Canada

1. You may start medical tests only after the person with kidney failure has been approved by a transplant centre to have a kidney transplant.
2. You will get a blood test to confirm your blood group.
3. You will likely receive an information package from the Ontario living kidney donor program. It may include:
 - Information on living kidney donation.
 - A health questionnaire to complete and send back.
 - A letter to your family doctor that includes a list of tests you will need to have.
 - A donor declaration that must be signed and witnessed. The declaration states that you are not being paid for your kidney. Paying for organ donations is illegal in Canada.
4. Your test results need to be sent to the Ontario living kidney donor program so they can be looked at by the kidney donor specialist. **If your test results are normal then you will get a medical letter to support your visa application. You should apply for a three- to six-month visa to allow enough time for the evaluation, surgery and recovery.** Once the living kidney donor program sends the letter, the decision to approve the visa is solely up to the federal government and may be dependent on the citizenship of the donor. The hospital will not provide any letters of support for a donor to apply to stay in Canada.
5. If your tests results are abnormal, you will get a letter telling you about any follow-up testing or care that you need. You will not be able to donate your kidney.
6. You need to buy travel medical insurance in case of an accident or injury while in Ontario that is not related to the kidney donation surgery.

If you have any questions or need more information, contact the living kidney donor program at the transplant centre where the person you know is being treated.

For more information about Trillium Gift of Life Network and PRELOD, visit giftoflife.on.ca/en/transplant.html

Credit: Maureen Connelly, Nurse, Living Donor Coordinator, St. Michael Hospital.

For more information about the Ontario Renal Network please visit ontariorenalnetwork.ca/en

Need this information in an accessible format?
1-877-280-8538, TTY 1-800-855-0511, info@ontariohealth.ca
July 2021 CQ-ORN5015