

Aftercare following an operation to donate your kidney

Department of Transplant

Last reviewed: July 2024

Information for Patients-Live donors

Next review: July 2027

Leaflet number: 1170 Version: 2

Introduction

You are now ready to go home from ward 37 at Glenfield Hospital, you will stay under kidney (renal) and transplant care. We advise that you should stay on the medical follow up package that we offer you. These results will also be copied to your GP.

Please let us know if your GP, home address or contact details change so that we can update our records.

Our aim is for you to return to your full health and in the long run to be just as healthy as you were before donation.

There are certain things you must not do for a few weeks. This guide will explain all the do's and don'ts of the recovery stage and answer those important questions you have.

We will see you:

- 2 weeks after your operation in outpatients clinics at Leicester General Hospital
- 12 weeks after your operation
- 12 months after you live donor kidney (nephrectomy) operation
- Yearly appointments for the rest of your life

These are guidelines and recommendations from the British Transplant Society and NHS blood and transplant.

- If Leicester is not your nearest renal and transplant centre then we can refer you to your local renal (nephrology) centre for your yearly follow up if you would prefer. Please just let us know or you will automatically be re-called to Leicester.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

After going home from the ward

Recovery

After your operation, recovery usually takes about 4 to 6 weeks. You may have several side effects of the operation such as:

- Constipation
- Tiredness
- Feeling bloated or wind pain
- Feeling a sense of anti-climax
- Feeling low

All the above are normal and should not be the cause of panic. If you have any of these side effects or feelings and are worried, please get in contact with the hospital, transplant/live donor coordinators or your GP.

Diet and exercise

After your operation it is important that you drink plenty of water. It is recommended by the ward nurses to drink a minimum of 2 litres of water/squash a day. You can drink tea and coffee as an extra to this 2 litres. You can drink alcohol in moderation.

You also need to make sure that you are eating enough and having a balanced diet to stop any major weight gain. There are guidelines to help you with your diet at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/> At first, it is best to eat little and often until your bowels have fully recovered. Slowly build up your meals to 3 healthy meals a day.

Whilst recovering, it is also important that you exercise. You must only do gentle exercise at first and slowly increase time spent exercising and effort.

You must not do any heavy lifting, stretching, twisting or bending as it may result in a hernia, but after 6 weeks this can start to increase.

When you feel tired its advised that you should rest. The feeling of tiredness will improve slowly.

Wound care

The stitches used to close your wound do not need to be taken out, your body will dissolve them. More often than not, removing of the kidney is done with key hole surgery, so there are a few small scars only a couple of inches long. Should these scars become:

- red, swollen, hot or sore you must go and see your GP or contact the hospital as these are signs of infection. This can delay the recovery process a lot.
- A bulge or swelling near the surgical wounds. This maybe due to a collection of tissue fluid that may need to be drained. It may also be a small hernia that may need surgical repair to strengthen the area once you are fully recovered.
- You can shower/bathe once discharged. The ward nurses will give you dressings on discharge from ward 37.

Medication and side effects

Before you leave the ward, the pharmacist will talk to you. You will be told what pain medication you are on and how and when to take it. You may feel slightly sick and dizzy from the pain killers but that is normal.

If you have any other side effects and are concerned, contact your GP or local hospital. There should not be any withdrawal symptoms from the pain killers if you are taking the correct dosage.

There are some medications which are advised that you should avoid after donating your kidney. They are a particular type of painkiller, called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Taking these for a long time can be harmful to your remaining kidney.

Examples of these are: Ibuprofen, Diclofenac or Naproxen.

Your GP or pharmacist will be able to advise further.

Travelling

When you fly, the risk of you developing a blood clot (deep vein thrombosis) goes up a lot. It is for this reason that you are advised to wait 6 weeks before you fly. Before you fly, you need to make sure you have had blood tests to check your kidney function and have been seen by the surgeon. Without all these you are declared unfit to fly.

Sex, contraception and pregnancy

You may resume your usual sexual activity when you feel comfortable to do so and no longer have any pain. **It is advisable for women to wait to get pregnant for 12 months after the operation so you must use contraception.** You may have been advised to stop taking the contraceptive pill before donation so speak to your GP about when is a suitable time to start taking the pill.

Returning to work

You should avoid heavy lifting for the first 6 weeks. You can return to work once you feel fit. This is usually no longer than 6 weeks. The ward doctors will give you a sick note, this can also be given in your 2 week clinic follow up appointment. If you speak to your employers before the operation they will often arrange for a phased return for you.

Driving

The DVLA in Swansea have no specific rules about starting to drive, but we recommend talking to the transplant team at your 2 week check up to discuss a suitable time to start driving. On average a donor will return around 4 to 6 weeks.

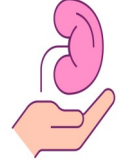
Financial reimbursement

NHS England will reimburse living donors so as to make sure that the financial impact on the living donor is minimal. The claim form is included in your discharge pack.

There are slightly different requirements depending on whether you are employed and self-employed. Please allow around 12 weeks for financial reimbursement from NHS England. The live donor team can support with the completion of the form if needed. Information is also available at:

[Reimbursement-of-Expenses-for-Living-Donors-A06PA-Dec-2021.pdf](https://www.england.nhs.uk/reimbursement-of-expenses-for-living-donors-a06pa-dec-2021.pdf)
[england.nhs.uk](https://www.england.nhs.uk)

NHS



A transplant from a living donor can
transform the life of someone with
 kidney disease.



Thank you gift: NHSBT (NHS Blood and Transplant service)

A Living Donor designed silver pin will be sent to your home address after the kidney donation.

This is a recognition of your gift of a kidney from NHS Blood and Transplant. They want to show their appreciation with a specially designed pin badge. These are only sent out every few months, so you may not get it straight after your operation.

Contact details

After you are discharged from ward 37 you can contact the ward if you have any questions about your recent surgery. There is always an on-call doctor available 24 hours a day but you will need to contact the ward nurses first who will support your concerns. Your GP can also say if you need to be seen at the hospital.

You can contact the living donor team to discuss any concerns you may have after your live kidney donation.

If you have any concerns about your outpatient appointments please contact:

0116 258 8042 (8:00am to 4:00pm only)

Ward 37 Glenfield Hospital: 0116 258 4126 / 4197 (24 hours a day)

Transplant co-ordinator office: 0116 258 4117/4736/4601 (8:00am to 4.00pm only)

Renal Pharmacy: 0116 258 8177

If it is an emergency please call 999 or go to your nearest Emergency Department to be seen.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
 على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અસ્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

Previous reference:

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk