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*Information for You from Your Health Care Team*

## Expanded Criteria Donor Kidney Information

Receiving a kidney transplant is one of the ways to treat kidney failure that has a high rate of success. However, it is hard for everyone who needs a kidney to receive a kidney in a short period of time. A new source of kidneys is what is called an expanded criteria donor kidney. These kidneys are different from standard criteria donor kidneys in several ways. The following questions and answers should help explain what expanded criteria donor kidney means.

### **What is an expanded criteria donor kidney?**

It is a kidney from an older donor whose kidney function is not completely normal. The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) describes it as follows:

- Any donor age 60 or older OR
- Any donor between the ages of 50 and 59 with two of the problems listed below:
  - Signs of less than normal kidney function before death
  - Death due to a stroke
  - History of high blood pressure

### **What is the difference between a kidney from an expanded donor and one from a standard donor?**

An expanded criteria kidney is a kidney whose function may not to be completely normal. These kidneys are only offered to patients who have agreed to accept them. There is a higher chance of a kidney from an expanded donor **not** working as well or as long as a standard donor transplant. But, they may offer a patient a time off dialysis.

A standard criteria donor is a kidney from a healthy person who is between 18 and 60 years of age. When placed on the **Active Waiting List**, all patients are considered for standard criteria donor kidneys. Kidney transplants from standard donors usually work well.

### **Why would I think about accepting an expanded donor kidney?**

It would increase your chance of having a transplant because:

- There is a national shortage of kidneys
- There are 60,000 patients now on the waiting list for a transplant
- Waiting times for transplant get longer as need increases
- Patients in some areas of the country a wait more than 4 years
- Some patients do not do well on dialysis. By agreeing to be considered for an expanded criteria donor kidney, some patients may not need to wait as long for a transplant and reduce their risk of serious complications from being on dialysis.

**If you are on both the expanded donor and the standard donor waiting lists your chance of a transplant is better and sooner.**

## **What are the risks with an expanded donor kidney?**

Many people with an expanded donor kidney will live longer than they would if they stayed on dialysis.

Sometimes problems can occur with an expanded criteria donor kidney because of the surgery and the side effects of medicines. This may result in the expanded donor kidney not lasting as long as a standard kidney.

Sometimes expanded donor kidneys do not work and you may have to return to dialysis. However, expanded donors are very carefully evaluated to try and assure that the kidneys will work when they are transplanted.

## **How do I decide about getting an expanded donor kidney?**

You will need to discuss this with your medical team. Part of the decision depends on your state of health. If you have not started dialysis you may wish to wait for a standard donor kidney. If you feel you cannot wait, you might want to think of the option of the expanded donor. Ask your doctors and nurses to help with the decision.

## **Are expanded donor kidneys offered to everyone on the transplant list?**

No, expanded donor kidneys are only offered to people who have agreed to accept them.

If you are on the expanded donor kidney list you are also active on the standard kidney transplant list.

## **If I agree to accept an expanded donor kidney, does it mean that I might not get a standard kidney?**

No, being on the list will not hurt your chances of being offered a standard kidney. Anytime a kidney is found in the United States, you will still have a chance to receive it if you are the best match.

## **If I am on the expanded donor list, do I have to accept an expanded donor kidney if it is offered?**

No, it is your choice. It will not affect your being offered a kidney at a later time.

## **Can I change my mind and remove my name from the expanded donor waiting list once I am on it?**

Yes. You can add or remove your name at any time from the expanded donor list.

## **Will an expanded donor kidney last as long as a standard kidney?**

There is a greater chance that your expanded donor kidney may not function as well or as long. It is important that you discuss your situation with the transplant team. Together you can decide what is best for you.

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