

Myths about Living Kidney Donation

Myth #1: A kidney donor will have to take medications for the rest of their life

Fact #1: A kidney donor will be given prescriptions for pain medication and stool softeners at discharge from the hospital. These are only for the immediate post-operative period, after that time, a donor does not have to take medication.

Myth #2: A kidney donor will have debilitating pain for an extended period of time.

Fact #2: A kidney donor will have some pain after surgery from both the incisions and related to gas and bloating. This pain will diminish in the days following surgery and can be controlled with pain medication if necessary.

Myth #3: A kidney donor will be on bed rest following surgery.

Fact #3: A kidney donor will be out of bed and walking independently before discharge from the hospital.

Myth #4: A kidney donor will be in the hospital for an extended period of time after surgery.

Fact #4: A kidney donor will be hospitalized for two nights (i.e. if surgery is on a Tuesday, the donor will typically be discharged on Thursday).

Myth #5: A kidney donor can no longer participate in sports or exercise.

Fact #5: A kidney donor should be able to return to regular activities and exercise at approximately 4-6 weeks following surgery.

Myth #6: A kidney donor will have to follow a new diet plan following donation.

Fact #6: A kidney donor should eat a healthy, well balanced diet. There are no dietary restrictions following donation.

Myth #7: A kidney donor can no longer consume alcohol following donation.

Fact #7: While excessive alcohol use is always dangerous, a kidney donor can consume alcohol in moderation.

Myth #8: A female kidney donor should not get pregnant after donation.

Fact #8: A female kidney donor should wait 3-6 months' time after donation to become pregnant. The body requires time to recover from the surgery and to adjust to living with one kidney prior to pregnancy. [Also, The infertility rate of female donors is virtually identical to that of non-donors.]

Myth #9: A kidney donor's sex life will be negatively affected by donation.

Fact #9: A kidney donor may engage in sexual activity when they feel well enough to do so.

Myth #9: The life expectancy of a living kidney donor is shorter than that of non-donors.

Fact #9: Studies show that life expectancy for those who have donated a kidney is the same as for similarly matched people who haven't donated.