

# Living Donation

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Living donation occurs when a living person donates an organ or part of an organ for transplant to another person in need. It is one of the most important sources of organs for transplantation, accounting for 210 transplants in Ontario in 2004, and a significant portion of the increase in organ donation over the last ten years. However, the availability of organs from living donors does not meet the crucial need of the many individuals on transplant waiting lists.

Living donors are most often family members or close friends of the recipient. Living anonymous donation, where the identities of donors and recipients remain concealed from one another, is being studied in British Columbia and may be considered at Ontario transplant programs in the future.

- The first successful living donor transplant was a kidney transplant performed in Boston in 1954 between 23-year-old identical twins.
- The most common living donation is kidney. 171 Ontario residents received a living kidney transplant in 2004, while 39 received a living liver transplant.
- Living kidney donation is the most successful of all transplant procedures and long-term transplant survival rates are higher than for recipients who receive an organ from a deceased donor.
- While kidneys are the most common organs donated, advances in transplant medicine have made it possible to transplant a part of the liver (lobe), lung (lobe) and small bowel in a living donation. Other types of living donation are under investigation in this rapidly evolving field.
- Currently there are more than 1800 men, women and children in Ontario waiting for life-saving or life-enhancing organ transplants. Approximately three-quarters of those awaiting a transplant are in need of a kidney.

## **Living donation has many advantages:**

- Potential to reduce waiting times for transplant to a matter of months rather than possibly years for deceased donation, contributing to better health after transplant surgery.
- Typically, the organ donated by a living donor is healthier at the time of the operation, leading to a better-functioning organ after transplantation, and longer graft survival.
- Sense of satisfaction for the donor who has helped to save or improve the life of another.

For more information on living donation, or organ and tissue donation:

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