

Sample Letter

Sometimes it's easier to put thoughts down on paper rather than talk with others in person. Let this sample letter inspire you to write your own letter.

Dear Friends,

Some of you know I have kidney disease. You may not know that my kidneys have worsened to the point where they no longer work on their own. My only treatment options are dialysis or a transplant.

Regular dialysis can keep me alive, but long-term dialysis is hard on my body and other organs. A transplant could give me a longer, healthier, more normal life—and more time with the people I love.

But the reality is that getting a donor kidney is not easy. About 100,000 people like me are waiting for a deceased donor kidney. The average wait time in the United States is five years or more. Some of us will wait for years, and many of us will die while waiting.

Time is not on our side. But we have another option: receiving a kidney from a **living donor**.

Asking another person to consider donating a kidney to me is difficult, but it greatly improves my chances of getting a transplant. It's also the best possible option for anyone who needs a transplant. A living kidney lasts longer and has better function—and those who receive a kidney from a living donor live about seven years longer than those who remain on dialysis.

You might not know a lot about living donation. I know I didn't until transplant became the best possible option for me. Understandably, some people are worried about having surgery and what living with one kidney will mean for them.

I'd like to share with you some information about living kidney donation:

- People only need one kidney to live a healthy, long life.
- Most donor surgery is done laparoscopically, meaning through tiny incisions.
- The recuperation period is usually fairly quick, about two weeks.
- My insurance will cover the cost of a donor's evaluation and surgery.
The transplant program can give extensive information on this if you'd like to learn more.
- My potential donor will have a separate team of health care professionals who handle the physical and emotional evaluation all candidates must have. Their job is to answer all questions and look out for my donor's best interests. This is all confidential and not shared with me.

If you'd like to learn more about becoming a living donor for me, I would be happy to talk with you. You also can contact Saint Luke's, my transplant program, at _____. If you want to talk to someone who's already donated a kidney, Saint Luke's can help arrange that.

I encourage you to learn more about living donation by visiting the National Kidney Foundation at kidney.org/livingdonation. It offers a free, confidential helpline at 855.NKF.CARES (855.653.2273), or you can reach out by email at nkfcares@kidney.org.

I completely understand if living donation is not for you, but you can still help me! Consider being an organ donor after death. Also, please help me by sharing my story with others. At the very least we can increase the public's awareness about kidney disease and living donation. These simple steps can truly help all of us on the wait list. I remain hopeful I will soon receive a new kidney.

Thank you for taking time to read my story.

› **Contact us**

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