

What if I am “Ruled Out” as a Potential Living Donor?

During the living donor evaluation process, it is the medical team’s job to be more conservative with your care, and the decisions that are made, than you may want to be with yourself. The medical team must first consider what they learned about your specific health situation, and compare that information to what they know about living donor outcomes. This means that it is possible that the medical team may tell you that, at this time, the risks of living donation are too high for you to be a donor.

This careful evaluation of potential living donors is important for several reasons:

- It helps make sure that living donors have good surgical outcomes
- Donors are more comfortable with their decision to donate when they know that the medical team takes donor candidacy very seriously
- Transplant recipients tell us that they feel better accepting the kidney knowing that the donor’s medical evaluation is very thorough

Transplant recipients have often stated that it was the desire of their loved one to help them that was the most meaningful to them. Because you took the time and made the effort to explore living donation, even if you are unable to actually be their living donor, is a powerful act of support for your loved one.

Of course, you may still experience a range of emotions if you are ruled out as a potential donor. These may include sadness, disappointment, relief and confusion.

Try to remember there will continue to be meaningful ways for you to provide support, even if you are not able to be the living donor. You can give the transplant recipient key support during the time leading up to transplant and during surgical recovery (including help with transportation, food preparation, fundraising and/or child care). If another person is able to become their living donor, you can serve as a key support person for them as well.

Finally, if you are ruled out as a potential living donor, you can still be a living donation champion. You can help others learn about living donation and, with your loved one’s permission, you can tell other people about their need for a living donor. You can provide basic information about the donor evaluation process and you can help out with logistics. These steps will help your loved one get a living donor transplant.