

Making Possible A Gift of Life

Living Organ Donation
and Transplantation
for Hindu Communities

"In the joy of others lies our own."

His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj
BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha



What is living organ donation?

- Organ donation is the giving of an organ to someone who needs it, to save or transform their life.
- There are two ways of donating an organ: a living donation or a donation after death.
- A living donor is someone who donates an organ whilst they are alive. Usually this is to help a close relative or friend who is unwell and needs a transplant.

TRANSPLANT – An operation transferring one person's organ to another person

- The commonest living organ donated is the kidney. Most people have two kidneys but one kidney can do the job just as well for most people and allows you to live a normal, healthy life.
- A living kidney transplant lasts on average much longer than a transplant from a deceased donor.
- Success is much more likely when the person donating (donor) and the person who needs treatment (recipient) are from similar ethnic backgrounds.
- Living kidney transplantation can be planned at the time most suitable for the donor and the recipient.

DIALYSIS – A regular treatment that removes toxins from the blood when the kidneys stop working

- A living kidney transplant can, in many cases, be arranged before the patient starts dialysis. This may result in the recipient not having to go on dialysis at all.



Our number one priority always is the safety of the donor at the operation and for the long-term.

Professor Vassilios Papalois

Consultant Transplant Surgeon

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, London

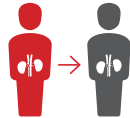
Why is living organ donation important for the Hindu community?

- Hindus and people from Asian communities are more likely to develop high blood pressure and diabetes than the general population.
- These conditions often lead to long-term kidney disease and may result in kidney failure.
- Sometimes this needs intensive treatment like transplantation or dialysis. Most people with kidney failure need to dialyse in a hospital three times a week.
- After a kidney transplant, most patients can lead a normal life for many years.
- In 2017, there were around 1,000 Asians (16% of the total) waiting for an organ transplant in the UK. A vast majority of these were waiting for a kidney transplant.
- Hindus and Asians on average have to wait longer compared to the general population for an organ.



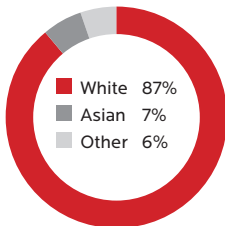
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Number of living Asian donors (2016-17)



1009

Number of Asians waiting for an organ (2017)



Proportion of people donating a living kidney (2016-2017)

What does Hinduism say?

Some people may worry that donating an organ is not allowed in Hinduism.

Here are some quotations from Hindu scriptures and leaders:



Of all the things that it is possible to donate, to donate your own body is infinitely more worthwhile.

Manu Smruti

Two of Hinduism's key principles, daan and seva, support organ donations.

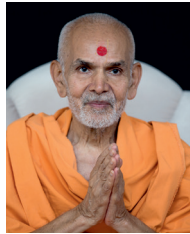
Sanskrit meanings:

DAAN – Selfless giving | **SEVA** – Selfless service



Living organ donation is a very important form of seva [selfless service]. It should be done selflessly, without expecting anything in return.... if we can donate an organ – usually it is the kidney – this is a very valuable and great form of seva, by which you will receive the blessings of God.

HH Mahant Swami Maharaj, Spiritual Head
BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha



Giving the gift of life, or helping others to live, is seen as a form of 'daan' or donation in Hinduism. Destiny or fate does not mean you don't seek treatment if you are ill. There is nothing wrong with accepting an organ donation of any kind.

Sadhu Yogvivekdas, Head Sadhu
BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, London



Organ donation is one of the highest forms of daan one can do. There is nothing in Hinduism that stops you putting your hand out and asking for some help.

Ajay Jobanputra, Governor
Shri Vallabh Nidhi UK

Experiences of living kidney donation from Hindu families

Every organ donation carries a life-changing story for those involved. Here are some examples of what 'living organ donation' means to these families:



My mum gave birth to me and has looked after me my whole life, so why would I not give her back the quality of life she so deserves? The message I would have for others in a similar position is 'go and be proactive'. It's a tough conversation to have, but I'd do it again if I could. Kidney disease affects a large number of Indian people, and we need to start having open conversations about live kidney donation.

Swati (donor)



Kanchan (recipient – mother) and Swati (donor – daughter)



Whilst I was on dialysis, I had to spend a certain amount of time every day (about 5-6 hours) at the hospital. It wasn't fun but it had to be done. I couldn't get permanent work because of the amount of time it takes. Six months after I got my kidney I got permanent work. I could travel. I've become a dad twice.

Dhruv (recipient)



Before the operation I was fine and healthy, and even after, I am still healthy. My message to all the Indian communities and any human being is to go forward and donate your kidney if you can live without it.

Kishore (Dhruv's Uncle and kidney donor)

I see, but what can I do?

- As a Hindu, you can help your family and friends by finding out more about living organ donation.
- If you know a member of your family who is waiting for a kidney transplant, you should seriously consider living donation as an option.
- Talk to your family and friends about organ donation. Let them know if you may be interested. They may have a story to tell too!
- Raise the issue within your community. The more people that know about living organ donation, the easier it is to talk about.
- If you don't know anyone who needs a kidney at the moment, but would like to be a donor, you could consider joining the organ donor register.
- You can find out more about living donation at www.organdonation.nhs.uk/about-donation/living-donation

How can BAPS Charities help?

- If you have any questions, please feel free to contact: organdonation@uk.bapscharities.org

Also, watch our information video about living organ donation at: www.bapscharities.org/activities/living-organ-donation

- We can help put you in touch with people who have gone through the process in our community
- We can help put you in touch with your local living donor coordinator



A GIFT OF LIFE