

Information for International Kidney Donor Candidates

Background

Experience has shown that live kidney donor candidates who live outside the United States face practical barriers to donation at Mass General that local donors do not face. Many international donors:

- Incur greater travel expenses, including more hotel and meal expenses, than local donors.
- May lose more wages than local donors due to more time away from home.
- Incur additional expenses, such as the expense of document translation, medical visas, and travel insurance, that U.S. based donors do not incur.
- Face a more challenging recuperation following donation, because they are away from their home, family, friends, and other supports.
- Face more difficulty completing the required follow up after kidney donation.

MGH will support international donors under limited circumstances when all requirements are met. The MGH live donor program works closely with the staff of the MGH International Office (mghipc@partners.org) to manage international kidney donor candidates.

Eligibility to Donate

International donors must meet all standard MGH donor eligibility criteria. In addition, international donors must meet the additional ten (10) criteria below. The MGH donor team may exclude donors if it appears based on interactions in the pre-transplant phase that the donor candidate cannot meet the criteria below and in particular if it appears that the donor candidate is unlikely to complete the required post-donation follow up.

International donor candidate requirements:

1. **Complete the online donor screening form** (mghlivingdonors.org), which is available in English and Spanish.
2. **Submit medical records** that have been professionally translated into English. The donor candidate is responsible for arranging and paying for translation, as per MGH international office policy.
3. **Apply and receive a medical visa.**
 - a. The donor evaluation cannot proceed until the visa has been approved.
 - b. The MGH donor team will provide donor candidate with a letter supporting the visa.

- c. The donor candidate must schedule appointment at U.S. Embassy in their country, bring the letter provided by the donor team and apply for the visa.
 - d. The donor candidate may need to apply for a visa extension if the donation does not occur within the time frame of the medical visa (typically 3-6 months).
 - e. Costs of visa and/or an extension of the visa must be done by the donor
4. **Obtain a travel health insurance policy** that covers medical care unrelated to donation, which must be in effect during all phases including evaluation, donation, and post-donation.
5. **Incur all travel related expenses and tolerate all lost wages** that result from donation, recognizing that there are no funds available for international donors through Mass General or from other sources such as the National Living Donor Assistance Center. Donor candidates who require support from the recipient must make their own arrangements with the recipient.
6. **Stay in the United States for their entire donor evaluation**, to allow for efficient completion of the evaluation. After the evaluation is complete, approved donor candidates may return home prior to actual donation, at their own discretion and subject to visa requirements.
7. **Wait a minimum of two to eight weeks after approval prior to actual donation**, as dictated by recipient readiness and scheduling requirements. Extended periods of waiting may be required based on infectious disease status of the donor candidate and his or her home country. In addition, extended waiting time in the U.S. may be required if donation through a paired kidney donation program is planned. *Note, paired kidney donation is difficult to arrange under the best of circumstances and may not be available to all donor candidates.*
8. **Travel to Mass General for a minimum of one day** to undergo pre-admission testing, one to two weeks prior to donation.
9. **Stay with a caregiver in Boston for a minimum of three (3) days** after discharge from the hospital.
10. **Remain in Boston for a minimum of ten (10) days** following donation.
11. **At 6, 12, and 24 months after donation, submit follow up questionnaires** and receive required follow up care including blood and urine testing either through local providers or by returning to Mass General.