

Mayo Clinic Minute: What is a donor chain?

There are more than 90,000 people on the waiting list for a kidney transplant in the U.S. Unfortunately, the demand for kidneys exceeds the supply. However, so-called living donor chains are giving hope to those in need of vital organs.

[Dr. Shennen Mao](#), a Mayo Clinic transplant surgeon, explains how donor chains work.

Video	Audio
	Every 10 minutes, someone is added to the national kidney transplant waiting list.
	"It's more than 80,000 people."
	Dr. Shennen Mao says living kidney donor chains are a great way to increase the number of available organs for transplant.
Shennen Mao, M.D. Transplant Surgery Mayo Clinic	"A living kidney donor chain is when someone altruistically donates a kidney, meaning donates a kidney with not a specific individual in mind, that can start a chain effect of donors."
	A donor chain also can be initiated when a good Samaritan donates on behalf of a friend or family member, but unfortunately, they're not a direct match for the recipient. The incompatible donor then donates their kidney to another person who is a match, while the original recipient gets a kidney from another compatible donor in the chain.
	"There's no limit on the chain reaction. There have been chains of two, four, eight, sometimes even more."
	It's a gift that keeps on giving. Living donor chains expand the donor pool, helping more people in need of a kidney transplant.
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Sonya Goins.
