



Live Donation: Financial Toolkit

SECTION • 4

Living Organ Donation for Members of the US Military

Members of the US Armed Forces and US Coast Guard are permitted to be living donors in most cases, but they must follow the specific policies and protocols of their specific Branch (i.e. Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force etc).

In general:

- Members on active duty, who wish to donate an organ while living, *need approval* from their respective military branch commands.
- Requests for approval to be a living donor should be addressed to the member's commander *after* completion of compatibility studies.
- Upon receipt of the member's request to be a living donor, the commander will arrange for *counseling by a medical officer* concerning the nature of the donation and the surgical procedure involved.
- There will be an *examination* by medical officer or civilian physician to determine physical fitness for donation surgery.
- Counseling by a medical officer will also include that donor surgery will not become a basis for *special duty* assignment, and the member may not be eligible for *disability benefits* from the military or the Veterans Administration.
- The member must *sign a service record entry* attesting that they received the above specific counseling and that they understand.
- Military and/or TricCare *financial coverage for live donation surgery may be restricted*, limited or not covered.
- There are *specific leave requirements* which need to be reviewed and approved by military personnel staff.
- After member's live donor surgery and convalescence period are completed, the member will need medical evaluation by a medical officer to *determine the member's fitness for continued military service*.
- New military enlistment may or may not be affected by previous organ donation.

Just as there are some risks to future life and disability insurability for all living donors, there are particular risks for active duty military to consider. Specifically, prospective living donors in the military need to have a full discussion with their medical officer and commander regarding the impact live donor surgery may have on their unit's "mission readiness," their continued military service, changes to assigned duties and options for re-enlistment and retirement.

However, many active duty military members have become successful living donors and returned to their normal duties.

It is important for active duty military members to be fully informed, and discuss with their military medical providers, their commanders and their families.