

# KIDNEY TRANSPLANT

## I have a donor – but we are not a match

### KIDNEY EXCHANGE PROGRAM (KEP)



Transplant  
Education for  
Living Legacies



If you and your potential donor have completed:

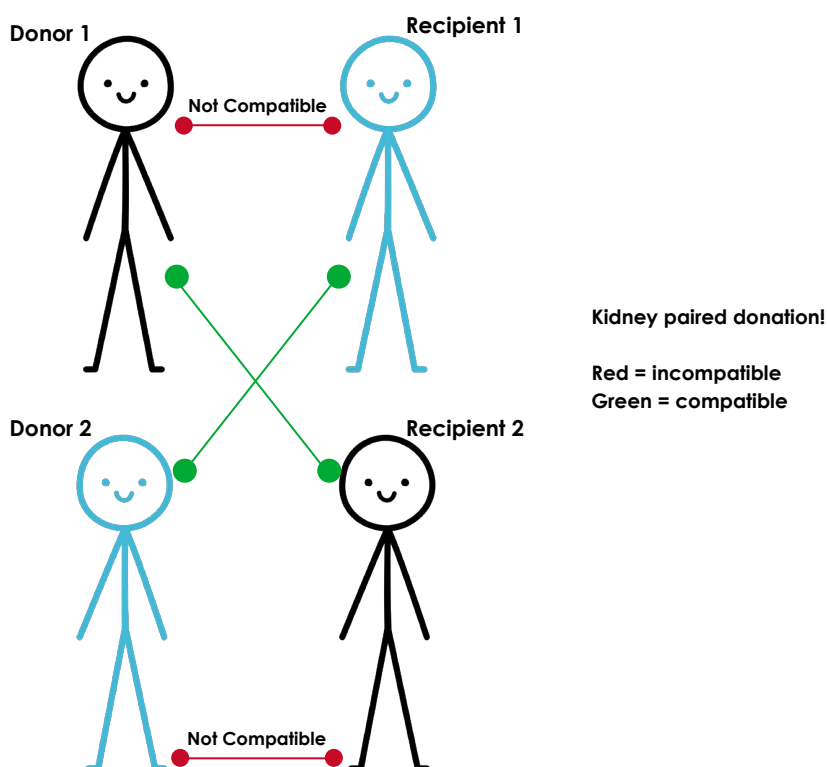
- Initial Consultation
- First Cross-match
- Second Cross-match

and the second cross-match result is positive (incompatible), there are still options available:

- **Kidney Exchange Program (KEP), also known as Kidney Paired Donation**
- **Desensitisation using Plasmapheresis**

#### WHAT IS THE KIDNEY EXCHANGE PROGRAM?

- Designed for patients with a willing donor who is medically incompatible.
- Donor-recipient pairs are entered into a national matching database.
- The program identifies compatible matches between different donor-recipient pairs.
- The first KEP in South Africa was established at Groote Schuur Hospital in 2025.
- Transplants can proceed even when matched pairs are located in different parts of the country.
- All donor and recipient surgeries are performed simultaneously.



#### LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

- The KEP complies with the National Health Act (Act 61 of 2003, Chapter 8).
- All donors and recipients require approval from the Ministerial Committee for Organ Transplants.
- Participation is voluntary, and consent may be withdrawn at any stage before surgery.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION:

Participants must consent to the collection and secure storage of:

- Personal information
- Blood group and tissue typing results
- Donor-recipient relationship details
- Medical test results and transplant outcomes

#### Key principles:

- Information is stored in a secure, password-protected database.
- Access is restricted to authorised transplant staff.
- Information is not shared outside the program without consent.



## COSTS:

- There is no fee to participate in the KEP.
- Medical costs are generally covered by provincial health authorities or the recipient's medical aid.
- Travel expenses, accommodation, and loss of income are not covered.
- Any form of payment or incentive between donors and recipients is illegal.

## BENEFITS:

- Improves the likelihood of finding a compatible donor.
- Provides access to a living donor transplant.
- May reduce the risks associated with incompatible transplantation.
- Allows recipients to receive a compatible kidney while enabling donors to help their loved one indirectly.

## RISKS AND LIMITATIONS:

- A compatible match cannot be guaranteed.
- The time required to find a match is unpredictable.
- Standard surgical risks remain the same as for any living donor transplant.
- Planned transplants may be postponed or canceled due to medical or logistical reasons.

## HOW THE PROCESS WORKS:



- Donor and recipient information is entered into the KEP database.
- Matching runs are performed regularly throughout the year.
- If a potential match is identified:
- A repeat cross-match is performed.
  - Medical suitability is confirmed.
  - All parties must agree to proceed.
  - Simultaneous surgery dates are scheduled.

## DONOR AND RECIPIENT REQUIREMENTS:

### Recipients

- Must be actively listed on their transplant unit waiting list.
- All medical assessments must be up to date.

### Donors

- Must complete the full donor evaluation process.
- Must meet all medical, psychological, and social assessment requirements.

## APPROVAL PROCESS:



1. Match identified through KEP.
2. Medical evaluations completed.
3. Approval obtained from the relevant Transplant Panel(s).
4. Documentation submitted to the Department of Health.
5. Department of Health approval granted.
6. Final consultations, blood tests, and cross-match performed.
7. Transplant date scheduled.

## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS



- Donors and recipients may not be managed and cared for by the same nephrologist once transplantation proceeds.
- Recipients may accept or decline a matched kidney.
- Donors will not be informed of the recipient's identity.
- Donor kidneys are transported to the recipient's transplant centre if necessary.
- Participants should not engage with the media or social media regarding the exchange before transplantation.



### IF A MATCH CANNOT PROCEED:

In rare circumstances:

- A recipient may become medically unfit for transplantation.
- A donor may become medically unsuitable.
- A kidney may be damaged during retrieval or transport.

Appropriate alternative allocation processes and waiting-list priority measures will be applied where necessary.

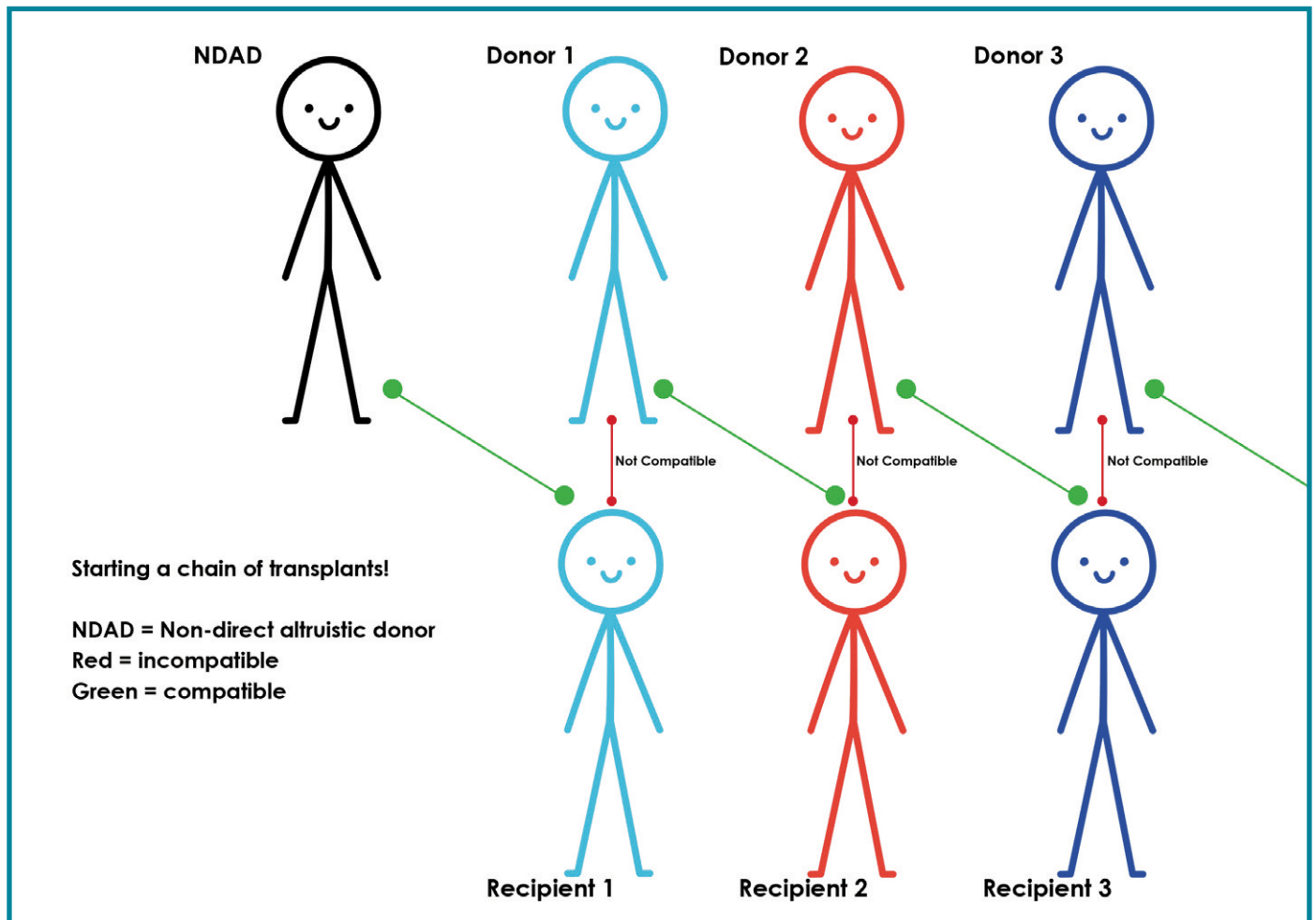


### EXPANDING THE PROGRAM:

The KEP may include:

- Two-way exchanges (most common)
- Three-way or multi-way exchanges
- Non-directed altruistic donors ("Good Samaritan" donors)

A single altruistic donor can initiate a chain of multiple transplants, significantly increasing transplant opportunities.



### FURTHER INFORMATION:

For questions regarding participation in the Kidney Exchange Program (KEP), contact your transplant team or transplant coordinator.

The donation process is built on informed consent, safety, and ethics, ensuring donors can make decisions freely and without pressure. Organ Donation is a Gift of Life. Trading in organs is illegal and prohibited!