Guess Who Can Donate Their Kidneys Now!

HIV-positive to HIV-positive transplants are now possible for people living with the virus.

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In a first, people living with HIV can donate kidneys to other people who have the virus. HIV-positive to HIV-positive transplants have taken place since 2016, but those procedures involved deceased donors. This new medical milestone marks “a hopeful time for patients living with HIV and end-stage organ disease,” says Dorry Segev, MD, PhD, associate professor of surgery at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore (Johns Hopkins University is one of the first centers approved for the surgeries). “Organ transplantation is even more important for patients with HIV, since they die on the waiting list even faster than their HIV-negative counterparts. For these individuals, it can mean a new chance at life and a larger pool of organs.”

If this procedure had been allowed in the past, nearly 500 to 600 HIV-positive people could have donated kidneys and other organs to save more than 1,000 HIV-positive people each year, Segev told Contagion Live.

What’s more, the new transplants will give scientists a chance to study what happens if the donor and recipient have different strains of HIV and how a strain becomes dominant—research that can help us all.

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