

Husband of Donor

I'm the husband of a living kidney donor. We've been together for almost twenty years.

When donation was first discussed, we all decided to step forward for testing. My immediate reaction was simple: I assumed it would be me. It felt like an easy decision, one I could carry. I was happy to donate, and at that point I didn't really think twice about it.

When it turned out my blood type wasn't a match, my wife said she would step forward. We talked about it as a family, the two of us and our children, and agreed on a compromise. My sister-in-law, who is married to the recipient, would be tested first, and only if that wasn't possible would my wife proceed. That felt like the right order, and it gave us space to think things through together.

I was involved in the decision-making, but ultimately the choice was hers. I wanted her to do what she felt comfortable with. I was honest about my concerns, particularly around the impact of surgery on her health, but I also trusted her judgement. What steadied me was the way she spoke about donating: calmly, clearly, and with conviction. That eased a lot of my fear.

I never really thought, *this is hard for me*. Of course I was concerned, she's my wife, but I tried to keep my focus on the positive impact this would have on my brother-in-law and his family, and the chance it gave them to reclaim their lives. That perspective mattered to me.

The hardest part hasn't been the idea of surgery itself. I'm incredibly proud of my wife, though not surprised - she lives by her values, and this is a natural extension of that. Fear and anxiety for her only really surfaced later, around the pre-op assessment, when things became more immediate. When worries come up, my role is simple: listen, be present, and support.

I've never felt pressure to be unwaveringly supportive. That's just who I am.

What has surprised me most is how we've pulled together as a family. Donation is often talked about collectively, but in reality the decision rests with the donor alone. It's a significant undertaking, and for around six weeks it will affect our family while my wife recovers. We're fortunate, she doesn't have the added pressure of work during that time, and we have extended family around us, but those practical realities are often invisible.

My wife is, and always has been, stronger than she realises. This is just one more example. We're proud that she's chosen to give part of herself to help someone else. That feels like a legacy in itself.

This experience hasn't changed how I see her, I've always thought she was incredible. It hasn't changed how I see myself either. Donation isn't about heroics or reassurance, it's about clarity, choice, and acting in line with what matters most.

Looking ahead, I know this will always sit quietly in the background of our lives, especially at future family gatherings. I also think it's powerful for our children to see values lived out, not just talked about.

If there's one thing I'd want other partners of potential donors to know, it's that you don't have to be a blood relative to donate. Anyone can be tested as a living donor, that possibility matters.

I've had no direct contact with healthcare teams, and that feels appropriate. Their focus needs to be on donors and recipients. I always knew support was available elsewhere if I needed it, through charities or online, and family support has been enough for me.

If there's something I've carried quietly through all of this, it's simple: I love my wife, and I'm deeply proud of her.