

# Pran

In 2008, aged 32 I was diagnosed with kidney stones and through investigation I found out that I was born with a condition called a Horseshoe Shaped Kidney. My kidneys were joined together (although they both worked independently) and the left kidney had developed kidney disease, which ultimately meant both my kidneys would fail.

Fast forward to 2012 and my health was deteriorating as my kidney function dropped to around eGFR 30. My Mum decided she wanted to be worked up as a Live Donor (it's what any Parent would do), but my Mum had just turned 60 and I felt so guilty having to put her through this. She was not only my Mum, but my Brother's Mum too, as well as a Wife to my Dad. As grateful as I was to possibly get my life back (I'd only been married 4 years) I had so many doubts about my Mum doing this - what if something went wrong? What if my Mum's health suffers by doing this? What if she didn't survive the surgery??

Following a rigorous work up by the Renal Team at Leicester General Hospital for both myself and my Mum in October 2013 we were given the green light for a live donation kidney transplant to go ahead. The joy was immense, as my health had really suffered during 2013 and the Doctors were advising me to think about dialysis, which is something I did not want.

On the 4th December 2013 my Mum went down to theatre in the morning and had her kidney removed. Later on that day, I received my Mum's kidney later on that day.

The kidney transplant went really well. My kidney function went from below 10 to 42 immediately, and my Mum was fine after the transplant. She was in a little bit of discomfort, but she was back home within 2 days, a few stitches, as the kidney was removed via keyhole surgery, and advised to rest for 2-3 weeks. I went home on day 5 and took about 3 months off work to recover properly and to also see through the winter months without getting any colds or infections. Life was good and I had my health back!! I still had to be really careful, avoid certain foods, keep

Fast forward to August 2017. I attended a wedding and ate something that did not agree with me. Within a few hours I knew something was not right. I was admitted into hospital within 2 days and told I had food poisoning and my kidney function had dropped. I spent a total of 10 days in isolation, and although the doctors managed to get my kidney function up, there was long term damage, and the Doctors were unsure whether I would ever get the function back to the levels it was before.

Over the next 2 months I was in and out of hospital with illness, infections and a kidney that was slowly fading. In November 2017 I started PD dialysis at home which lasted till June 2018. It was tough, being hooked up to a dialysis machine EVERY NIGHT for 8 hours just to survive. I always felt heavy and tired on PD Dialysis as I was carrying fluid around in my stomach all day, so my appetite was low. I had to be so careful of the tube in my stomach which I used to connect to the dialysis machine. Sleeping was difficult, I had to remain so still and could not turn over in case the tube pulled, so I never really got much sleep.

I had to stop PD Dialysis in October 2018 as the PD tube in my stomach got severely infected internally, and I then had to move onto Haemodialysis (HD) literally the next day at a centre via a neckline. I was so scared of doing HD, but ironically, it was so much better for me. It was tough, and so much more aggressive than PD. I had to attend a Dialysis centre for 4 hour dialysis sessions 3 times per week. It was pretty much a blood transfusion. I felt like I had been hit by a bus after Haemo Dialysis!! I was drained, weak, and light headed, but I found that once I got used to I had way more energy as I was not carrying lots of fluid in me like with PD, and I also had freedom as I was only dialysing every other day, so I could go out for dinner or a party with my family and not have to worry about doing dialysis once I got home.

Thankfully, during this time of doing HD Dialysis my Wife was being worked up to become a live donor for me. It was the ultimate sacrifice she could do, and like with my Mum, I did not want her to go through this for me, but she wanted to do it. We had 2 daughters aged 7 and 3 and all the fears and anxieties from the previous transplant with my Mum came flooding back. Knowing both of us would be in hospital at the same time and

what if something happened to my wife during the procedure?

During all the work up and testing we were told that my body had developed a high level of antibodies, and the Doctors basically told us that if we did a live donation like I had first time round with my Mum, my body would kill the kidney from my wife, and they would not let my wife go through such a procedure to waste her organ.

This news was devastating for us both! That one glimmer of hope to get some kind of normality back into our lives, was taken away. However, we were then informed of the Paired Exchange Programme, and this was a viable option for us to pursue. My Wife would donate her kidney to someone else in England, and in return, I would receive a kidney from someone else. It was not the ideal way we wanted to do it, and it all hinged on my Wife agreeing to donate to someone else. We were advised by the Renal team that it usually takes 3 attempts at being admitted into the Paired Exchange Programme before there is success, and the 'window' only opens every 3 months. Thankfully, we were able to get matched up on the first attempt.

On 21st November 2019 my Wife and I were admitted to Leicester General. It was so strange being in hospital with my Wife. We had to make arrangements for our family to have the kids, and I had my last dialysis session that evening. The next morning - Friday 22nd November 2019 - my Wife donated her kidney. I was told I would be going down to theatre later that afternoon, however, there was a delay in getting my new kidney to Leicester from wherever it was coming from, and I did not go down to theatre until 7pm. I returned back to the ward and 2am the next morning with a healthy, working kidney. My kidney function the next morning at initial tests was around 80% (eGFR 80) and I felt great!!

My wife went home on Sunday (2 days later) and I had to remain in for another 3 days, but each day I felt stronger and better, and on Wednesday 27th November 2019 I was discharged and went home. It was the best Birthday present I could have wished for!!

As I write this piece, almost 2 and half years on, my kidney function has climbed to 90+ and has not fluctuated or dropped from the moment it went in, and I have my life back. I still have to attend hospital for

check ups every 4 months, but I look after myself with diet and exercise and always make sure I take my medication on time. It has been such a long journey, the hardest and most difficult experience I have ever had to endure, and it has not just been hard on me, but my whole family. However, without the love and blessings of the 2 most important Women in my life (my Mum and Wife) I would not be here now.

Live Organ donation is such a wonderful thing. It is the most selfless thing anyone can do for another human, and having experienced Live Organ Donation directly (my Mum) and via the Paired Exchange Programme, both are equally important in giving someone else a second chance of life.

The new lease of life and the gratitude I have cannot be measured. I know there is often a fear about live organ donation and even donating organs when someone sadly passes away, however, I have had first hand experience of struggling through life and seeing life pass me by.

Organ Donation really is a Lifesaver.