

DR. RAMASAMY BAKTHAVATSALAM, PROFESSOR DIVISION OF TRANSPLANT SURGERY



Dr. Ramasamy
Bakthavatsalam

Since the initial kidney transplant procedure in January 1968, 4,000 kidney transplants have been performed at UW Medicine. This is truly a reflection of transplantation being the “Gift of Life,” acknowledging families who have lost loved ones donating their organs generously (deceased donors) or from the kindness of individuals donating part of their life (living donors) to end the suffering. This “Gift of Life” has motivated my surgical journey. My urological, vascular and transplant technical skills have guided my expertise to help many patients in need.

UW Medicine is the largest transplant program in the Pacific Northwest, receiving 1,000 patient referrals per year with more than 200 kidney transplants per year. We are one of the few programs in the country to maintain a consistent five star rating (two standard deviations above) for both rate of transplantation and kidney transplant outcomes as reported by the Scientific Registry for Transplant Recipients. The United Network for Organ Sharing selected our program for the COIIN (Collaborative Innovation and Improvement Network) Project as exemplary for other programs to share our best practices. This increase in the number of transplants while maintaining the best outcomes in the country was possible by careful and tireless work of the transplant team with the appropriate matching and usage of the available organs in recipients, thereby increasing the transplantation rate and avoiding dialysis and the associated morbidity and mortality.

The living donor potential is increasing due to education of our recipients and their families regarding the available options to donate:

1. Direct donation
2. Donor exchange (for positive cross match/incompatible blood type/age mismatch)
3. Internal swap/National Kidney Registry (NKR)
4. Altruistic donation and perpetuity chains
5. Therapeutic donors

Direct donation implies the living donor can directly donate to an intended recipient (relatives/family and friends). If the donor is found to be incompatible with the blood type or positive cross match they are entered into a swap with similar pairs and transplantation is facilitated. NKR is a national program where similar pairs participate and take part in a chain of transplants. We have successfully initiated perpetuity chains starting with altruistic donors and continuing the swaps amongst incompatible pairs. Therapeutic donors are donors who had the unfortunate circumstance of planned removal of their kidney for non-cancerous conditions which are successfully used for transplantation.

Most of our patients participate in research, either sponsored or independent, allowing our patients to experience new medications and technologies. As a result, our program is forefront in experience and expertise with these technologies.



If you are interested in learning how you can support **kidney transplant**, please [click](#) here or email Jeannie Stuyvesant, senior director for philanthropy, at jstuy@uw.edu.



Dr. Stephen Rayhill, Professor, Division of Transplant Surgery, performs a kidney transplant at UW Medical Center-Montlake.



David Drouillard after donating peripheral blood stem cells

DR. DAVID DROULLARD STEM CELL DONATION

In medical school, Dr. **David Drouillard**, General Surgery R4, registered to be a stem cell donor at a “Be The Match” registration drive. *“I signed up and promptly forgot about it. Seven years later I received a phone call asking me to start the donation process - saying yes was the easiest decision I have made. Only a minority of registry members will ever be contacted to donate, so I encourage everyone to sign up at “Be The Match.” I’m grateful for the chance to donate, and to my co-residents for covering me during the all-day donation process.”*