

## Rare double kidney swap between two sets of brothers

October 6, 2006

By Matt Markovich

SEATTLE - Surgeons at Seattle's Swedish Medical Center will conduct a rare double swap kidney transplant involving two sets of brothers on Monday. It will require four simultaneous operations with each one dependent on the success of the other.

"It's not unique, it's rare," says Dr. William Marks, the director of the organ transplant program at Swedish Medical Center. The multiple kidney transplant resulted from two sets of brothers who wanted to donate a kidney to their blood brother, but that blood brother wasn't a perfect match.



Layne Smith of Seattle was diagnosed with Polycystic Kidney Disease in 2000. The life-threatening genetic disease causes cysts to form in the kidneys. Eventually the kidneys grow from the size of a fist to possibly the size of a football and become non-functional.

Smith, a CPA from Northgate, had both his kidneys removed earlier this year and has been dialysis ever since.

His brother, Gary Smith of Missoula, Montana, offered to donate one of his kidneys for transplant into Layne but tests determined he was the wrong blood type. A transplant from Gary to Layne was impossible.

Layne was then put on a list with 60,000 other people in need of a kidney transplant. His wait for a deceased donor organ may have been longer than usual because he has an uncommon blood type.

But staffers in organ donor match program at Swedish that Dr. Marks overseas found a pair of brothers in Yakima facing the same dilemma. One brother wanted to give to another, but their blood types differed, making their transplant from brother to brother impossible.

Marks and his team found the blood types of Gary Smith and the Yakima brother in need of a kidney did match. They suggested the swap to the donating brother and both brothers agreed. Instead of donating a kidney to their blood brother, they'll donate to another brother in spirit.

"I'm excited", says Layne Smith. "Some people I talked with say their brother would never do this from them. I'm luck to have a brother to do this."

Dr. Marks is careful to emphasize the operation won't be simple. "People think that getting a kidney transplant is like changing out your oil filter, it's not," he said.

There are ethical considerations that play into the surgery as well. "We have to assure that once one donor is committed, that both donors are committed which is why we want to move along in parallel," says Marks.

The operations will begin with both donors going under the knife first. Marks and his team will inspect the donors kidneys to see if they will be suitable for transplant. If not, the four way operation could be put into jeopardy.

If the kidneys look good, then the two recipients will then be prep to received them and the double swap transplant will take place. From beginning to end, the operations will take about seven hours.

### For More Information: