

“Your Health and Safety Matters!”

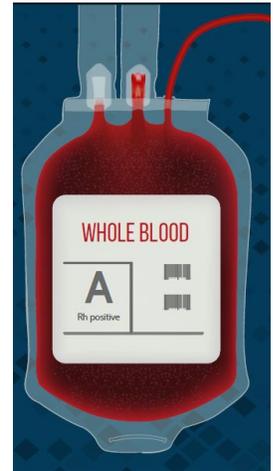
January is National Blood Donor and Organ Donor Month! Please give the Gift of Life!

Over 100,000 people in the U.S. are waiting for an organ transplant.

Unfortunately, many may never get the call saying that a suitable donor organ — and a second chance at life — has been found. It's estimated that every day in the U.S. 21 patients die because of the lack of donor organs.

It can be hard to think about what's going to happen to your body after you die, let alone donating your organs and tissue. But being an organ donor is a generous and worthwhile decision that can be a lifesaver.

Organ donation takes healthy organs and tissues from one person for transplantation into another. Experts say that the organs from one donor can save or help as many as 50 people. Organs you can donate include: kidneys, heart, liver, pancreas, intestines, lungs, skin, bone & bone marrow, and cornea.



People of all ages and background can be organ donors. If you are under age 18, your parent or guardian must give you permission to become a donor. If you are 18 or older you can show you want to be a donor by signing a donor card.

116,000 MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN AWAIT LIFESAVING ORGAN TRANSPLANTS.

Becoming an organ donor is easy. You can indicate that you want to be a donor in the following ways:

- **Register with the National Donate Life Registry.** This ensures that your donor registration travels with you, no matter where you live or move across the country. You can register online at “RegisterMe.org”. Or if you have an iPhone with iOS 10, you can register through the Health app. Registrations submitted via iPhone go directly to the National Donate Life Registry.
- **Designate your choice on your driver's license.** Do this when you obtain or renew your license.
- **Tell your family.** Make sure your family knows your wishes regarding donation.

The best way to ensure that your wishes are carried out is to register with the national registry and have donor designation on your driver's license or state ID. You may include your wishes in your living will if you have one, but that might not be immediately available at the time of your death.



If you have designated someone to make health care decisions for you if you become unable to do so, make sure that person knows that you want to be an organ donor.

It's also very important to tell your family that you want to be a donor. Hospitals seek consent from the next of kin before removing organs, although this is not required if you're registered with the National Donate Life Registry or have donor designation on your driver's license or state ID card.



If you've never considered organ donation or delayed becoming a donor because of possibly inaccurate information, here are answers to some common organ donation myths and concerns.

Myth: If I agree to donate my organs, the hospital staff won't work as hard to save my life.

Fact: When you go to the hospital for treatment, doctors focus on saving your life — not somebody else's. You'll be seen by a doctor whose specialty most closely matches your particular condition.

Myth: Maybe I won't really be dead when they sign my death certificate.

Fact: Although it's a popular topic in the tabloids, in reality, people don't start to wiggle their toes after they're declared dead. In fact, people who have agreed to organ donation are given more tests (at no charge to their families) to determine that they're truly dead than are those who haven't agreed to organ donation.

Myth: Organ donation is against my religion.

Fact: Organ donation is consistent with the beliefs of most major religions. These religions include Roman Catholicism, Islam, most branches of Judaism and most Protestant faiths. If you're unsure of or uncomfortable with your faith's position on donation, ask a member of your clergy.

Myth: I'm under age 18. I'm too young to make this decision.

Fact: That's true, in a legal sense. But your parents or legal guardian can authorize this decision. You can express to your family your wish to donate, and they can give their consent knowing that it's what you wanted. Children, too, are in need of organ transplants, and they usually need organs smaller than those an adult can provide.

Myth: An open-casket funeral isn't an option for people who have donated organs or tissues.

Fact: Organ and tissue donation doesn't interfere with having an open-casket funeral. The donor's body is clothed for burial, so there are no visible signs of organ or tissue donation. For bone donation, a rod is inserted where bone is removed. With skin donation, a very thin layer of skin similar to a sunburn peel is taken from the donor's back. Because the donor is clothed and lying on his or her back in the casket, no one can see any difference.

Myth: I'm too old to donate. Nobody would want my organs.

Fact: There's no defined cutoff age for donating organs. The decision to use your organs is based on strict medical criteria, not age. Don't prematurely disqualify yourself. Let the doctors decide at the time of your death whether your organs and tissues are suitable for transplantation.

Myth: I'm not in the best of health. Nobody would want my organs or tissues.

Fact: Very few medical conditions automatically disqualify you from donating organs. The decision to use an organ is based on strict medical criteria. It may turn out that certain organs are not suitable for transplantation, but other organs and tissues may be fine. Don't prematurely disqualify yourself. Only medical professionals at the time of your death can determine whether your organs are suitable for transplantation.

Myth: I'd like to donate one of my kidneys now, but I wouldn't be allowed to do that unless one of my family members is in need.

Fact: While that used to be the case, it isn't any longer. Whether it's a distant family member, friend or complete stranger you want to help, you can donate a kidney through certain transplant centers.

If you decide to become a living donor, you will undergo extensive questioning to ensure that you are aware of the risks and that your decision to donate isn't based on financial gain. You will also undergo testing to determine if your kidneys are in good shape and whether you can live a healthy life with just one kidney.

Myth: Rich and famous people go to the top of the list when they need a donor organ.

Fact: The rich and famous aren't given priority when it comes to allocating organs. It may seem that way because of the amount of publicity generated when a celebrity receives a transplant, but they are treated no differently from anyone else. The reality is that celebrity and financial status are not considered in organ allocation.

Myth: My family will be charged if I donate my organs.

Fact: The organ donor's family is never charged for donation. The family is charged for the costs of all final efforts to save your life, and those costs are sometimes misinterpreted as costs related to organ donation. Costs for organ removal go to the transplant recipient.

Now that you have the facts, you can see that being an organ donor can make a big difference, and not just to one person. By donating your organs after you die, you can save or improve as many as 50 lives. Many families say that knowing their loved one helped save other lives helped them cope with their loss.

It's especially important to consider becoming an organ donor if you belong to an ethnic minority. Minorities including African-Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and Hispanics are more likely than whites to have certain chronic conditions that affect the kidneys, heart, lung, pancreas and liver.

Certain blood types are more prevalent in ethnic minority populations. Because matching blood type is usually necessary for transplants, the need for minority donor organs is especially high.

Sources: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/organdonation.html> <https://www.adrp.org/ABC>
<https://www.organdonor.gov/>

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