

National Donor Sabbath | November 11-13, 2016

Frequently Asked Questions, Talking Points and Statistics

Why are eye, organ and tissue donations needed?

Each year nearly 50,000 Americans receive corneal transplants, hundreds of thousands more benefit from tissue donation such as skin for burn victims, while more than 121,000 individuals are waiting for organ transplants. The need is great and without these surgeries, people will remain disabled or die.

Who can be a donor?

Anyone can decide to become a donor. Medical history or age does not automatically exclude a person from being a donor. Do not rule yourself out. Suitability for donation will be determined at the time of your death by a representative from the recovery agency.

Is there a cost to donate?

There is no cost to the donor's family or estate for donation. The donor family pays only for medical expenses before the death and costs associated with funeral arrangements.

Does my place of worship support eye, organ and tissue donation?

All U.S. major religions support donation as a final act of compassion and generosity.

Does donation affect funeral plans?

Through the entire donation process, the body is treated with care and respect. Funeral arrangements can continue as planned following donation. An open casket funeral service is possible for eye, organ and tissue donors.

Will my medical care be compromised if they know I'm a donor?

No. Donation is only considered after all efforts to save a patient have failed and a patient has died. Saving a patient's life is the health care provider's first priority.

How do I sign up to be a donor?

It's easy. Simply click on the NYS Donate Life Registry link at the top of this page. Make sure you discuss your wishes with your family.

What happens when I enroll in the Donate Life Registry?

By enrolling in the Donate Life Registry, you are giving legal consent for the recovery of your organs, tissues and eyes for the purposes of transplantation and research at the time of your death. Registry information is kept strictly confidential and can only be accessed by (a) Department of Health employees when required for the performance of their official duties, (b) federally regulated organ procurement organizations, (c) New York State licensed tissue and eye banks and (d) other entities formally approved by the Commissioner. Such access can only be for the purpose of identifying potential organ and tissue donors at or near the time of death.

Donation and Transplantation Statistics

- It is estimated that nearly 30,000 patients began new lives in 2015 thanks to organ transplants (8,500 deceased donors and 6,000 living donors)
- Over 119,000 men, women and children await lifesaving organ transplants. More than 1,000 of them are 10-years-old or younger.
- About 58% of patients awaiting lifesaving transplants are minorities.
- Another person is added to the nation's organ transplant waiting list every 10 minutes
- Sadly, 8,000 people die each year – approximately 19 each day, almost 1 every hour- because the organs they need are not donated in time
- The average waiting time for a kidney from a deceased donor is 3-5 years. A kidney from a living donor offers patients an alternative to years of dialysis and time on the national waiting list*
- 13% of patients waiting are in need of a liver. Living donation of part of the liver is an option for these patients; the remaining portion will regenerate and regain full function. Partial lung, intestine and pancreas living donation are possible as well
- More than 33% of all deceased organ donors are 50% or older. More than 5% are age 65 or older.
- Each year, there are approximately 30,000 tissue donors and more than 1 million tissue transplants; the surgical need for donated tissue is steadily rising
- A single tissue donor can help more than 50 people
- Nearly 50,000 people every year have their sight restored through corneal transplants
- More than 130 million people, approximately 54% of the U.S. adult population are registered eye, organ and tissue donors

Statistics from Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network and Donate Life America as of August 10, 2016