



# TAKECHARGE

WELCOA'S SELF-CARE BULLETIN

## Organ & Tissue Donation

### 3 WAYS YOU CAN SAVE LIVES

Since 1988, there have been 750,000 transplants performed and when surveyed, 95% of Americans are in favor of being a donor. But only 58% are actually registered. How can you help bridge the gap?

Let's take a look at the facts:

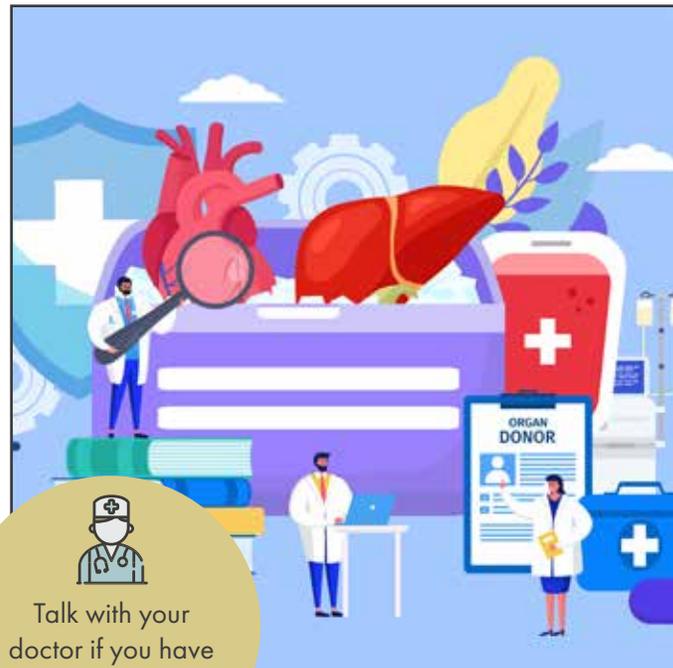
- » While you are reading this, another person has been added to the national transplant list
- » By the end of today, 22 people will have died while waiting for a transplant.
- » Approximately 120,000 men, women, and children are on the transplant waiting list. That is more than the largest football stadium in the US can hold.

These can seem like overwhelming numbers. You may be asking yourself, will my donation really make a difference?

The answer is yes. By registering to be a donor, your organs can save up to 8 lives, your corneas can restore sight to 2 people, and your tissue donation can be given to up to 75 people. *That is 85 families impacted by one decision.*

#### #1: REGISTER TO BE AN ORGAN & TISSUE DONOR

There are two quick and simple ways to become a donor. You can say yes on your driver's license or go to [www.registerme.org](http://www.registerme.org). Registration takes less than a minute. These will serve as legal consent. Before filling out the forms, make sure you discuss your decision with your family, friends, and caregivers.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

To help them understand the process, here is a brief overview of what will happen according to the Organ Procurement and Transplant Network (OPTN): Once a person dies, the search for a matching recipient begins. The surgical team removes the organs, cornea, skin, and bone as authorized and the incisions are closed. This eliminates the common fear that you will not be able to have an open-casket funeral.

The distance between the organ donor and the recipient plays a major factor on the donation process along with blood type and the size of the organs. The heart and lungs can only survive outside of the body for 4-6 hours and a liver can survive 8-12. Another critical factor is how long a recipient has been on the waiting list and if they are currently healthy enough to receive the transplant. There are 58 local Donation Service Areas and 11 regions used in the US for organ donation.

To read more about how the allocation process works and history behind organ donation including when the first transplant was performed, visit: <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/learn/about-transplantation/>.

## #2: FULL BODY DONATION

Body donation to science or to a university is used to further medical knowledge and advancements. Scientists are able to advance understanding of disease and development of new treatments and medical students are able to master their comprehension of the complex anatomy of the human body with such donations.

Donating your body to science is not the same as being an organ donor. It is more complicated in that there is no single organization or network that oversees the process of matching donors with research programs and medical schools. The decision for body donation should be researched and the steps to do so will depend on where you live or what type of program you want your gift to benefit. Use this list of body donation programs by state to view what is available where you live: <https://icds.online/body-donation-programs-by-state/>.

## #3: YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE DECEASED TO DONATE: LIVING DONORS

Did you know that in 2019, living donors made a record 7397 organ donations in the United States? This passes the old record set in 2004 by over 400+ donations!

Living donors are typically between the ages of 18-60 and do not have a history of high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, kidney disease, or heart disease. They are evaluated by the transplant center to ensure they are physically, emotionally, and psychologically ready for the process.

The decision to become a living organ or tissue donor is not an easy one. There are many factors to be considered for both the person donating and the person receiving the donation. We've pulled together a few common questions about the process and we recommend if you are considering this type of donation, to work with your physician on this important life-changing decision.

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### WHAT CAN I DONATE AS A LIVING DONOR?

Does not require hospitalization, can be done at anytime:

- » Blood: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/>
- » Platelets: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/giveplatelets.html>
- » Plasma: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/dlp/plasma-donations-from-recovered-covid-19-patients.html>
- » Hair: <https://locksoflove.org/faq/>

Requires hospitalization:

- » One of two kidneys
- » One of two lobes of the liver
- » One lung or part of a lung
- » Part of the pancreas
- » Part of the intestines
- » Skin
- » Bone (after knee or hip replacements)
- » Healthy cells from bone marrow and umbilical cord blood
- » Amnion fluid (donated after childbirth)

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### QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR PHYSICIAN AND TRANSPLANT CENTER

- » What does the evaluation process include?
- » What are the emotional and psychological aspects of living donation?
- » What should I know about the financial aspects associated with donating?
- » What information should I share with my support system?
- » Who are all the members of my transplant team including surgeons, doctors, nurses, and aids? What are their roles in my care?
- » Will we still be able to connect post-surgery? What are my options for support?