

It's About Life!

Make the commitment and share your intent to donate life

THE UNTHINKABLE HAS happened to you, and your family is now being asked: "Will you consider organ, eye, or tissue donation?" If you haven't previously discussed your intent to be a donor with your family, being asked this question at such a stressful time will only add to the anxiety and sadness they are already dealing with.

You may have already indicated your wish to donate on your driver's license, but it may not be readily available or satisfy the donor designation requirements in your state. Because there is often confusion when an unforeseen situation like this occurs, it is very important that you discuss your wish to be a donor with your family when the commitment is first made. When the

decisions your family makes are based on their knowledge of your wishes, it can ease their emotional pain and lead to a sense of peace.

Although advances in medical technology and donation are ongoing, the demand for organ, eye, and tissue donation still vastly exceeds the number of donors. Donate Life America, a not-for-profit alliance of national organizations and local coalitions across the United States, offers the following statistics on the need for donors:

- › Almost 100,000 men, women, and children currently need lifesaving organ transplants.
- › Every 12 minutes another name is added to the national organ transplant waiting list.

Learn the FACTS

Despite continuing efforts at public education, misconceptions and inaccuracies about donation persist. Learn these facts to help you better understand organ, eye, and tissue donation.

FACT: Anyone can be a potential donor regardless of age, race, or medical history.

FACT: All major religions in the United States support organ, eye, and tissue donation and see it as the final act of love and generosity toward others.

FACT: If you are sick or injured and admitted to the hospital, the number one priority is to save your life. Organ, eye, and tissue donation can only be considered after you are deceased.

FACT: When you are on the waiting list for an organ, what really counts is the severity of your illness, time spent waiting, blood type, and other important medical information, not your financial status or celebrity status.

FACT: An open casket funeral is possible for organ, eye, and tissue donors. Through the entire donation process, the body is treated with care, respect, and dignity.

FACT: There is no cost to the donor or their family for organ or tissue donation.

FACT: Signing a donor card and a driver's license with an "organ donor" designation may not satisfy your state's requirements to become a donor. Be certain to take the necessary steps to be a donor and ensure that your family understands your wishes.



- › An average of 18 people die each day from the lack of available organs for transplant.
- › In 2005, there were 7,593 deceased organ donors and 6,895 living organ donors resulting in 28,108 organ transplants.
- › In 2005, 44,000 grafts were made available for transplant by eye banks within the United States.
- › Approximately 1,000,000 tissue transplants are performed annually.
- › According to research, 98% of all adults have heard about organ donation and 86% have heard of tissue donation.
- › 90% of Americans say they support donation, but only 30% know the essential steps to take.

Making the commitment to be a donor gives you the opportunity to positively impact these statistics, and there's an easy way to find out how. Just go to Donate Life America's Web site at www.donatelife.net and click on either the "Commit to Donation" tab or choose your state under the heading "Register now to be a donor."

Once you have completed your state's procedure to become a donor, be sure to inform your family of your decision and learn their wishes. Then share your decision with your physician, friends, faith leader, and other important people in your life. ♦