



## Talking Points

Many people have questions concerning organ, eye and tissue donation. We have included a list of the most frequently asked questions and talking points to help educate the community about donation and the transplantation process.

### Frequently Asked Questions

- **How do I become a registered donor if I live in Ohio?**
  - Online at [www.lifelineofohio.org](http://www.lifelineofohio.org)
  - Say "yes" when receiving or renewing your driver license or state ID at the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV)
  - Fill out and return a Donor Registry Enrollment form (found in the Donate Life Ohio brochure) which is available at every BMV location or by calling Lifeline of Ohio at 800-525-5667
- **How do I become a registered donor if I live in West Virginia?**
  - Online at [www.donatelifewv.org](http://www.donatelifewv.org)
  - Say "yes" when receiving or renewing your driver license or state ID at the West Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
  - Sign a Uniform Anatomical Gift Card and return it to Lifeline of Ohio for entry in the West Virginia Donor Registry
- **How do I register if I don't live in Ohio or West Virginia?**
  - Online at [www.registerme.org](http://www.registerme.org)
- **Why should I consider registering as an organ, eye and tissue donor?**

Advances in medical science have made transplant surgery extremely successful. Transplantation is no longer considered experimental, but rather a desirable treatment option for end-stage organ failure. The major problem is that there are thousands of Americans waiting for a match to give them a second chance at life, yet there are not enough registered organ donors to meet the growing need. As a result, 20 men, women and children die each day for lack of an available organ.
- **What can I donate?**
  - Organs that can be donated include: kidneys, heart, liver, lungs, pancreas and small intestine
  - Tissues that can be donated include: heart valves, corneas, skin, bone, ligaments, tendons, nerves, fascia and veins

- A deceased donor can give all of the above
  - A living donor can give a kidney, or a portion of the liver, lung, small intestine or pancreas
- **What if my family members are against donation?**  
 Joining the West Virginia Donor Registry or the Ohio Donor Registry is an advanced directive for individuals over the age of 18, which means the legal next of kin cannot override their loved one's decision to donate. If an individual is under the age of 18 at the time of their death their parent or guardian can amend or revoke their donation decision. Sharing your donation wishes with your family and educating them about donation can help them feel comfortable with your decision and may encourage them to register as well. You can even share your donation preference on Facebook, using the "Life Events" feature on your Timeline.
  - **What if I change my mind about being a donor?**  
 If you change your mind, you may remove your name using any of the methods used to enter your name in the Registry. In Ohio, when visiting the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, prior to the end of the transaction, the customer must notify the clerk that he or she would like to be removed from the Registry.
  - **Will the quality of medical treatments and the efforts to save my life be lessened if I am registered to be a donor?**  
 No. The organ procurement organization does not become involved until independent physicians involved in the patient's care have determined that all possible efforts to save the patient's life have failed and death is declared. Additionally, hospital staff do not have access to the Registry.
  - **How are recipients matched to donors?**  
 People waiting for transplants are listed at the transplant center where they plan to have surgery, and they are placed on a national computerized waiting list of potential transplant patients in the United States. Under contract with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) maintains the national waiting list. UNOS operates the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network and maintains a 24-hour telephone and computer service to aid in matching donor organs with patients on the national waiting list and to coordinate efforts with transplant centers.

When donor organs become available, several factors are taken into consideration to identify the best-matched recipient(s). These include medical compatibility of the donor and potential recipient(s) on such characteristics as blood type, weight and age. Urgency of need and length of time on the waiting list are also factors in the allocation process. In general, preference is given to recipients from the same geographic area as the donor because timing is a critical element in the organ procurement process.

## **Facts**

- **Nearly 115,000 Americans are waiting for life-saving organ transplants:** While the need for transplants is high, only about 34 percent of West Virginians are registered organ, eye and tissue donors. In Ohio, that number is 59 percent.
- **You can donate at any age:** Your age should not prevent you from registering to be a donor. The oldest organ donor on record was 92!
- **Religions support donation:** All major religions in the U.S. support organ, eye and tissue donation. If you have questions about your faith and how it relates to your status as a donor, consult your religious leader.
- **Doctors save lives:** It's a myth that doctors will not work as hard to save your life if they know you are a registered donor. It is only after every last effort has been made to save your life and death has been declared that donation becomes an option. Hospital personnel do not have access to their state's Donor Registry.
- **Giving the Gift of Life is free:** A donor's family will not be charged for any medical costs associated with donation. All donation costs are incurred by the organ/tissue recovery agency.
- **Medical conditions should not concern you:** Pre-existing medical conditions should not keep you from registering as a donor. You might not be able to donate all eight organs, but one may be able to save someone's life. With medical technology constantly advancing, it's important to let medical professionals decide what organs and tissues can be used. Even people who have been sick in the past, with cancer or another illness, or have a current disease, such as diabetes, can register as a donor.
- **There is no discrimination:** Organs are matched through the United Network for Organ Sharing based on body size, blood type, medical urgency and geographic location as it relates to travel time. When it comes to saving lives, doctors do not discriminate on account of race, gender, age or any other factor.
- **It is illegal to profit from the sale of organs:** Organs are not sold between hospitals, medical professionals or independent salespeople. United States federal law prohibits the buying and selling of organs. Violators can face jail time and fines.