

UW HEALTH ORGAN PROCUREMENT ORGANIZATION

The Truth About Organ, Tissue and Eye Donation

Making a decision about donation comes, for many families, at a time of great stress, anxiety and sadness. By understanding the facts about donation, you can educate and prepare your family about your decision to become a donor, and they will find peace knowing they've carried out your wishes.

Who can be a donor?

Anyone can register to be a donor, even if you have pre-existing medical conditions. At the time of passing, the appropriate donation professionals will review the patient's medical and social histories and review current medical tests to determine eligibility for donation.

What can be transplanted?

Organs that can be transplanted include the heart, liver, lungs, kidneys, pancreas and intestine.

If I am a donor, will doctors still try to save my life?

Organ recovery takes place only after all efforts to save a patient's life have been exhausted and death has been declared. The medical team treating the patient is a completely separate team from the recovery and transplant teams.

Is there a cost to the donor or their family?

There is no monetary cost to the donor's family or estate. Donation is a gift and all of the costs associated with recovery are taken care of by the recovering agency.

Will my religious beliefs interfere with my wish to be a donor?

All of the widely-known religions: Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and many others fully support donation and consider it an act of charity. If you are unsure about your religion's position on donation, please consult your faith leader.

Will donation disfigure the body or interfere with funeral arrangements?

Donation does not cause disfigurement to a donor's body. Organ donation is done through a delicate surgical procedure that can be covered by clothing. Recovery agencies work closely with funeral service providers to ensure that there are no untimely delays. Families can still have an open-casket funeral and/or viewing if that is their wish.

Do wealthy or famous people receive transplants before others?

No. The system is designed to make sure that the person who is the best possible match, is in the most medical need and has been waiting the longest is the person who will be offered the transplant first. The length of time it takes to receive a transplant is governed by many factors, including blood type, tissue type, length of time on the waiting list, severity of illness and other criteria. Factors such as race, gender, age, income or social status are not considered when determining recipients.

For additional information or to register on your state's registry, please go to:

Wisconsin: YesWillWisconsin.com

Illinois: LifeGoesOn.com

Michigan: GiftOfLifeMichigan.org

Other states: DonateLife.net



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Organ, Tissue and Eye Donation – A Gift for Life

Transplantation holds the promise of life for thousands of patients with life-threatening conditions and diseases. The generosity of donor families, who at a time of great tragedy decide to help others, is immeasurable. However, the number of patients waiting continues to increase daily. Currently approximately 110,000 people in the U.S. await organ transplantation. More than 18 people die every day because they did not receive an organ transplant in time. One donor can save eight lives.

The numbers speak for themselves:

- More than 28,000 organ transplants, 45,000 eye transplants and 750,000 tissue transplants are performed each year in the United States.
- More than 8,000 families donated their loved one's organs last year.
- More than 6,500 people made the decision to become a living organ donor by donating a kidney or part of their liver to save another person's life last year.
- In Wisconsin, more than 1,600 people are currently waiting for an organ transplant.

Who is in need?

- Any one of us could someday be in need of a transplant. People with diabetes, high blood pressure, cystic fibrosis and other common illnesses are waiting for organs.
- People of all ages are waiting for organ transplants. Approximately 40,000 people under the age of 50 are currently waiting in the U.S.

How can you help?

- Residents of Wisconsin can authorize donation by going to the Wisconsin Donor Registry at YesIWillWisconsin.com. Residents of Illinois can register at LifeGoesOn.com, and residents of Michigan can register at GiftofLifeMichigan.org.
- Please tell your family about your donation decision. They may also wish to register their donation authorization.
- If you are from another state, please go to: DonateLife.net to learn how to register to be a donor in your own state.
- Advances in technology allow more people than ever to be donors, even those over 70 years of age and/or those with previous medical conditions and diseases.

National Organizations:

United Network for Organ Sharing 800-292-9537 unos.org
Donate Life America 804-782-4920 donatelifenet
US Dept. of Health & Human Services 888-275-4772 organdonor.gov
Eye Bank Association of America 202-775-4999 restoresight.org
American Association of Tissue Banks 703-827-9582 aatb.org

To learn more, to become a UW OPO volunteer, to sign-up for *The Ripple Effect* e-newsletter and/or to make a donation to support our public education efforts:

UW Health OPO: 608-265-0356

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