You can save 8 people’s lives by signing up to be an organ donor.
You can improve 50 lives or more by being an organ/tissue donor.

More than 105,000 Americans are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant at this very moment.
Today, 18 people will die because not enough organs are available for transplant.
Virtually all religious denominations approve of organ and tissue donation.
Most religions view organ and tissue donation as the ultimate selfless act.
Doctors are NOT less likely to save you if you are an organ donor!

Who can become a donor?
All individuals can indicate their intent to donate (persons younger than 18 years of age must have a parent's or guardian's consent). Medical suitability for donation is determined at the time of death.

Are there age limits for donors?
There are no age limitations on who can donate. Whether you can donate depends on your physical condition, not age. Newborns as well as senior citizens have been organ donors.

If I have a previous medical condition, can I still donate?
Yes! Transplant professionals will evaluate the condition of your organs at the time of your death and determine if your organs are suitable for donation. You should consider yourself a potential organ and tissue donor, indicate your intent to donate on your driver's license, donor card, or state donor registry, and discuss your decision with family members.

Can I be an organ and tissue donor and also donate my body to medical science?
Total body donation generally is not an option if you choose to be an organ and tissue donor. Eye donors still may be accepted. Also, there are a few medical schools and research organizations that still may accept an organ donor for research. If you wish to donate your entire body, you should contact the medical organization of your choice directly and make arrangements. Medical schools, research facilities, and other agencies study bodies to understand how disease affects human beings. This research is vital to saving and improving lives.

Why should minorities be particularly concerned about organ donation?
Minorities overall have a particularly high need for organ transplants because some diseases of the kidney, heart, lung, pancreas, and liver are found more frequently in racial and ethnic minority populations than in the general population. For example, African Americans, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics/Latinos are three times more likely than Whites to suffer from end-stage renal (kidney) disease, often as the result of high blood pressure and other conditions that can damage the kidneys. Native Americans are four times more likely than Whites to suffer from diabetes. Some of these conditions that can result in organ failure are best treated through transplantation and others can only be treated by this life-saving procedure. In addition, similar blood type is essential in matching donors to recipients. Because certain blood types are more common in ethnic minority populations, increasing the number of minority donors can increase the frequency of minority transplants. For more information on minorities and organ donation, visit the Web site of the National Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program at http://www.mottep.org.
How to Be a Donor

Giving the "Gift of Life" may lighten the grief of the donor's own family. Many donor families say that knowing other lives have been saved helps them cope with their tragic loss.

1. Register with your state donor registry: NEBRASKA https://www.donoregistry.org/Register/ne/en
   IOWA https://www.iowadonorregistry.org

2. Designate your decision on your driver's license.

3. Talk to your Family. To help your family understand and carry out your wishes, sit down with your loved ones and tell them about your decision to be an organ and tissue donor. They can serve as your advocate and may be asked to give consent for donation or provide information to the transplant team.

If I register as a donor will my wishes be carried out?

Even if you are a registered donor, it is essential that your family know your wishes. Your family may be asked to sign a consent form in order for your donation to occur. If you wish to learn how organ donation preferences are documented and honored where you live, contact your local organ procurement organization (OPO). The OPO can advise you of specific local procedures, such as joining donor registries that are available to residents in your area. http://organdonor.gov

Donation Details - What organs and tissues can be donated?

Organs: heart, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, liver, and intestines

Tissue: cornea, skin, heart valves, bone, blood vessels, and connective tissue

Bone marrow/stem cells, umbilical cord blood, peripheral blood stem cells (PBSC)

To learn more about donating bone marrow or a cord blood unit, see: http://www.marathon.org

If I'm a registered donor, will it affect the quality of medical care I receive at the hospital?

No! The medical team trying to save your life is separate from the transplant team. Every effort is made to save your life before donation is considered.

Will donation disfigure my body? Can there be an open casket funeral?

Donation does not interfere with having an open casket service. Surgical techniques are used to retrieve organs and tissues, and all incisions are closed.

Are there any costs to my family for donation?

No. Your family pays for your medical care and funeral costs, but not for organ donation. Costs related to donation are paid by the recipient, usually through insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid.

Can I sell my organs?

No! The National Organ Transplant Act (Public Law 98-507) makes it illegal to sell human organs and tissues in the United States. Violators are subject to fines and imprisonment. One reason Congress made this law was to make sure the wealthy do not have an unfair advantage for obtaining donated organs and tissues. (OPTN white paper on bioethics—Financial Incentives for Organ Donation, June 30, 1993)

Organ Transplants

How many people are now waiting for each organ to become available so they can have a transplant?

The number of patients now on the waiting list and other data are available at Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network: www.optn.org. The number of people requiring a life-saving transplant continues to rise faster than the number of available donors. Approximately 300 new transplant candidates are added to the waiting list each month.

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