

Some of the most frequently asked questions and answers about organ donation are shown below.

**Q: *Why should I register as an organ donor?***

A: There are 119,000 U.S. citizens waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant. The need is even greater in Canada due to its smaller population and lower percentage of organ donor registrants. ***One donor can save up to 8 lives and help heal up to 75 others.***

**Q: *Who can be a donor?***

A: Suitability criteria vary depending on the organ or tissue and its condition at the time of death, but generally anyone who has given first-person authorization through an organ donor registry, or whose next of kin has provided authorization, can be a donor.

**Q: *How old is “too old” to donate?***

A: Organs may be donated from newborns to about age 75. There is no age limit for tissue donation. At the time of your death, the appropriate medical professionals will determine whether your organs are usable. In fact, the oldest organ donor on record was 93 years old!

**Q: *How do you register to be a donor?***

A: It's simple and it takes only a couple of minutes. Simply [click here](#) if you're not a brother or pledge in Phi Gamma Delta to register as an organ donor. [Brothers and pledges should click here and complete steps one and two.](#) Your decision to be an organ donor will be indicated on your driver's license or state identification in the United States or on your provincial insurance card in Canada. If you're uncertain, please go through the registration process again. It's very important that you make your family aware of your wishes.

**Q: *I've already registered to be an organ donor. Do I need to do anything else?***

A: We're asking all our brothers and pledges in Phi Gamma Delta to register as an Immortal Phi Gam on its web site. Simply complete [this form](#) on the Fraternity's web site.

**Q: *When I sign up to be a donor, what does it mean?***

A: When you sign the registry, it means you are providing LEGAL authorization to become an organ, eye and tissue donor upon your death. If you are a candidate for donation at the time of your death, your family cannot revoke your decision. According to the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (UAGA), the organ procurement organization (OPO) will not seek affirmation of the organ donation gift from the donor's family, but will notify the family of the patient's wishes and decision to be a donor.

**Q: *How do I know that I'm on the registry?***

A: Your decision to be an organ donor will be indicated on your driver's license or state identification in the United States or on your provincial insurance card in Canada. If you register online your driver's license will NOT indicate that you are an organ donor until it is replaced. It's important to note that regardless of where you register – online or at the DMV,

your information goes to the same database. It is not necessary for you to register in multiple places.

**Q: *What if something happens to me when I'm out of the state? Will my registration still work?***

A: All matters concerning organ and tissue donation are under the jurisdiction of each state's or country's respective laws. While your donor registration will not serve as a legally binding authorization for donation outside of the state, it will serve as a clear indication of your wish to donate and will be shared with your family when they are approached by the local organ procurement organization (OPO).

**Q: *My family members do not believe in donation. How can I make sure that I will be a donor?***

A: Sometimes, resistance to donation is simply an unwillingness to contemplate the death of a loved one. The best thing you can do is register your wishes to become an organ and tissue donor.

**Q: *Can an individual or family designate that donated organs or tissues go to a specific individual?***

A: The national policy, set by the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), is designed whereby the sickest person usually gets a donated organ from a deceased individual. Blood type and size also impact who will receive a particular donated organ. The policy does allow for directed donation, whereby an organ is designated to go to someone – by name. The most common scenario is a directed donation to someone known personally by the donor family. The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (UAGA) state that a person, hospital or physician can receive a particular organ. UNOS policy states that donation of an organ(s) cannot discriminate against a person or class of persons on the basis of race, national origin, religion, gender or similar characteristic.

**Q: *If someone has been declared "brain dead," is it possible for him/her to recover?***

A: No. It is impossible to recover from brain death. Brain death should not be confused with coma or persistent vegetative state. Death can occur in one of two ways: first, when the heart and lungs stop functioning; and second, when the brain stops functioning. Brain death occurs when a person has irreversible, catastrophic brain injury, which causes brain activity to stop permanently. Heart and lung functions can only be maintained with the help of a mechanical ventilator.

**Q: *Does my social and/or financial status play any part in whether or not I will receive an organ if I ever need one?***

A: No. When you are on the transplant waiting list for a donor organ, what really counts is the severity of your illness, body size, tissue type, blood type and other important medical information.

**Q: *Can an organ donor also be a tissue donor?***

A: Yes. If a donor meets the criteria, both organs and tissues can be removed at the same time. Eight lives can be saved through organ donation and countless others through tissue donation.

**Q: *Can someone who is an organ transplant recipient also be a donor?***

A: Yes, someone who has received an organ donation can also be an organ/tissue donor.

**Q: *What if I'm in an accident and the hospital knows that I want to be an organ and tissue donor? They won't work as hard to save my life, right?***

A: Organ and tissue recovery takes place only after all efforts to save your life have been exhausted and death has been legally declared. The medical team treating you is completely separate from the transplant team. The donor registry will be checked only by the organ procurement organization (OPO) and only after death has been legally declared. Hospitals do not have access to check the registry. The OPO notifies the transplant team following authorization to donation.

**Q: *Can't I just donate my organs and tissues by writing it in my will?***

A: By the time your will is read, it will be too late to recover your organs and tissues.

**Q: *What organs can be donated?***

A: The heart, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, liver and intestines can be donated. Tissue that can be donated includes the eyes, skin, bone, heart valves and tendons.

**Q: *What about funeral arrangements?***

A: A donor's body is carefully reconstructed so that donation itself does not interfere with an open-casket funeral.

**Q: *Does my religion support organ, eye and tissue donation?***

A: Every major religion in the United States and Canada supports organ, eye and tissue donation as one of the highest expressions of compassion and generosity.

**Q: *Is there a cost to be an organ, eye and tissue donor?***

A: There is no cost to the donor's family or estate for donation. The donor family pays only for medical expenses before death and costs associated with funeral arrangements.

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