

# Understanding Tissue Donation

## Commonly Asked Questions

**What is the donation process?** Tissue is recovered from the donor by highly trained professionals in a surgical environment. The donor and family are treated with the utmost care and respect, while every effort is made to honor the donor's wishes.

In the case of a potential tissue donor, authorization for donation may be given in several ways:

- ***Through a Tissue Donor Coordinator***—A trained coordinator from a recovery agency may record authorization from the family over the phone or by having a conversation with the family in the room when a witness is present.
- ***Through a healthcare provider***—A member of the hospital staff may discuss donation with the family and will document authorization in the donor's medical chart.
- ***Through the Colorado or Wyoming Donor Registry***—If the patient is a registered donor, the recovery agency will acknowledge the patient's desires and try to ensure that the donor's wishes are carried through.

In every organ and tissue case, the family is mailed a copy of the written authorization or registry verification for their records. If authorization was gained over the phone, the document will be sent to the family in writing.



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**Who are the recovery agencies?** The recovery agency for most tissue (heart for valves, bone, soft tissue and skin) is Donor Alliance, the federally designated organ procurement organization (OPO) and tissue bank. The recovery agency for eye tissue is the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank. Both agencies serve Colorado and most of Wyoming, and each is registered and regulated by the FDA.

**Does it cost money to donate tissue?** No. Money is not exchanged for the donation of one's tissue. The donor's family is only responsible for the medical expenses that are incurred before death and the cost of the funeral.

**Will tissue donation delay funeral arrangements?** No. Donation will not cause a delay or change in funeral arrangements. Additionally, open casket viewing can still be an option after donation has taken place.

**What do I do now?** A donor coordinator will call you in the next few hours to discuss any questions you may have in detail. This call also allows the donor coordinator to obtain more information about your loved one's medical and social history. Our goal is to support you through the donation process. On-call tissue donor coordinators for both Donor Alliance and the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank are also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you have immediate questions, you may have a coordinator paged by calling (800) 448-4644.

To learn more about organ and tissue donation, please visit the following Web sites: [DonorAlliance.org](http://DonorAlliance.org) for tissue information and [Corneas.org](http://Corneas.org) for information regarding eye tissues. To register your decision to be a donor, visit [ColoradoDonorRegistry.org](http://ColoradoDonorRegistry.org) or [WyomingDonorRegistry.org](http://WyomingDonorRegistry.org) or call (888) 256-4386.



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