



National Donate Life Month 2016 – Facts & Statistics

Donation & Transplantation Facts

Registering as an organ, eye and tissue donor means a resident has made the decision to donate his/her organs, eyes and tissues at the time of his/her death. The resident's decision to be a donor takes priority over his/her family's preferences.

Quick Facts:

- **LIFESAVING IMPACT:** Just one donor can save up to eight lives through organ donation and save or heal more than 50 lives through eye and tissue donation.
- **ANYONE CAN REGISTER:** Anyone—regardless of age, lifestyle or medical condition—can register as a donor. Patients with chronic conditions can potentially save and heal lives through donation.
- **WHAT CAN BE DONATED:** Organs that can be donated include the heart, liver, lungs, kidneys, pancreas and small intestine. Tissues that can be donated include bones, skin, tendons, heart valves, veins and corneas.
- **MEDICAL CARE:** Your decision to be an organ, eye and tissue donor will not interfere with your medical care. Doctors and nurses caring for you before death are not involved in the donation process.
- **NO COST:** There are no costs associated with organ, eye and tissue donation. Your family will be responsible for the cost of your care prior to death and any funeral expenses.
- **DIGNITY AND RESPECT:** Donors and their families are treated with the utmost respect and care. Donation will not delay or prevent funeral arrangements, including an open casket funeral.
- **FAIR AND EQUITABLE:** Severity of illness, time spent waiting, blood/tissue type, size and distance are the factors that determine a person's place on the organ transplant waiting list.
- **MINORITY NEED:** Transplant matches made within ethnic groups can be more compatible. That is why it is important for people in minority communities to register their decision to be donors.
- **RELIGIOUS SUPPORT:** All major religions support organ, eye and tissue donation and view it as a final act of love and generosity.

More Info and Stats on Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation

- Saying yes to organ, eye and tissue donation saves lives. Every year, organ, eye and tissue transplants provide hope to tens of thousands of people suffering from disease, injury, trauma or blindness. (Approximately 500,000 Americans are saved by organ and tissue donation each year.)
- In Colorado and Wyoming alone more than 2,700 people are on the waiting list for a lifesaving organ transplant. More than 120,000 are waiting nationwide. Every 10 minutes another name is added to the national transplant waiting list. Thousands more patients could benefit from lifesaving and healing eye and tissue donations.
- Transplants offer patients a new chance at healthy and productive lives, returning them to their families, friends and communities. Transplantation requires the commitment of organ, eye and tissue donors to save and heal lives. There is still a great need for more people to register to give the gift of life.
- Residents can register their decision to be organ, eye and tissue donors at the time of their deaths by saying 'Yes' each time they obtain or renew a driver's license or state ID, or at www.DonateLifeColorado.org or www.DonateLifeWyoming.org anytime.



Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is National Donate Life Month?**

April was designated National Donate Life Month by the former U.S Department of Health & Human Services Secretary, Tommy G. Thompson in 2003 to help raise public awareness of the critical need for organ, eye and tissue donation. Organ procurement organizations, transplant centers, hospitals and other organizations sponsor special awareness events and donor recognition ceremonies to promote donation awareness and registration. Every day in April, people across the U.S. make a special effort to celebrate the tremendous generosity of those who have saved lives by becoming organ, eye and tissue donors and to encourage more Americans to follow their fine example.
- **Who can be a donor?**

People of all ages and medical histories should consider themselves potential donors. Your medical condition at the time of death will determine what organs and tissue can be donated. Patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes and hepatitis can potentially save and heal lives through donation. Organ donors in their 80s and tissue donors who lived past the century mark have been able to carry on their legacy as donors.
- **Does my religion support organ, eye and tissue donation?**

Every major religion in the United States supports organ, eye and tissue donation as one of the highest expressions of compassion and generosity.
- **Is there a cost to be an organ, eye and tissue donor?**

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.
- **Does social and/or financial status play any part in receiving an organ?**

No. Severity of illness, time spent waiting, blood/tissue type, size and distance are the factors that determine a person's place on the organ transplant waiting list.
- **If I have a heart on my license, will doctors try as hard to save my life in an emergency?**

Your decision to be an organ, eye and tissue donor will not interfere with your medical care. Doctors and nurses caring for you before death are not involved in the donation process. Saving the patient's life is the health care provider's only concern. Organ and tissue donation does not become an option until death has been declared.
- **Is it possible for a brain dead person to recover from his or her injuries?**

Organs are most commonly recovered after brain death, when all brain function has permanently stopped. Brain death is not the same as being in a coma or a persistent vegetative state. No one has ever regained consciousness from or survived brain death. Brain death occurs in about 1 of 100 hospital deaths.
- **After donating organs, corneas or tissue, is an open-casket funeral possible?**

Yes, an open casket funeral is possible for organ, eye and tissue donors. Through the entire donation process the body is treated with care, respect and dignity.
- **Why should I register to be an organ, eye and tissue donor?**

Organ, eye and tissue transplants offer patients a new chance at healthy, productive, and normal lives and return them to their families, friends and communities. Registering as a donor can help alleviate the burden of decision-making on your family. Please discuss your decision with loved ones.

To register as an organ, eye and tissue donor, go to www.DonateLifeColorado.org or www.DonateLifeWyoming.org today.