



Questions and Answers About Organ, Tissue, and Eye Donation



Why should I sign up as a donor?

There are people where you live who need a life-saving organ transplant. You have the power to help them. More than 3,500 of our neighbors in the Upper Midwest are waiting for a transplant. In the United States, 18 people die each day for lack of an organ.

Why do I need to document my choice about donation?

Whether you donate your organs, tissues, and eyes is up to you. It is very important that you talk with your family about your wishes. If you do not make your choice clear, LifeSource and/or Lions Gift of Sight will ask your family to make that decision for you.

What are the benefits of organ, tissue, and eye donation?

Families often find that donation helps them with the pain of losing their loved one. Donation is something good that can come from the death of a loved one. One person can save or heal up to 60 lives through organ, tissue, and eye donation.

Can I donate if I have health problems or if I am a senior?

Yes. Even though health and age are considerations, most people can donate. Don't "rule yourself out" because of age or health problems. Your age and health problems should not be the reason you choose to donate or not.

Will my family have to pay for the cost of my organ, tissue, and/or eye donation?

No. There is no cost to the donor or the donor's family. Any cost from the organ, tissue, and eye donation is paid by donation agencies. These agencies then charge the person who gets the donation and their health plan.

Does my religion support organ, tissue, and eye donation?

All major religions support organ, tissue, and eye donation. Donation is one of the highest forms of loving, giving, and caring. These are values which all religions are based.

If I am a donor, will I be able to have a normal, open-casket funeral service?

Yes. Donation does not prevent an open-casket funeral service or any type of viewing.

If I am a registered donor and I go into a hospital, will they let me die so they can have my organs?

No! Healthcare providers always focus on saving lives. Every effort is made to save a person before donation is even thought about. Organ, tissue, and eye donation is discussed only after all life-saving measures have failed. Donation is only considered after a person has died.

How are organs, tissue, and eyes given to patients waiting for transplants?

Each person waiting for an organ transplant is signed up with the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS). LifeSource works with UNOS to fairly give organs based on things like blood type, body size, location, how sick someone is, and how long they have been waiting for a donation. Lions Gift of Sight Bank works with local cornea surgeons to determine recipients.

Is there a “black market” for organs, tissue, and eyes in the United States?

It is against the law to buy or sell human organs and tissues in the United States (Anatomical Gift Act of 1968). Each organ, tissue, and eye donation and transplant is looked at by a national governing body. Strict rules stop any type of "black market" from happening in the United States.

Do the rich and famous get special treatment?

No. Everyone who is suitable for organ transplant is added to the national waiting list. This list is managed by the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS). Organs are fairly given out based on things like blood type, body size, location, how sick someone is, and how long they have been waiting for a donation.

Will the people who get the organs, tissue, and/or eyes know who the donor is?

No. The names of the donor and the people who get the organs, tissue, and eyes are private. LifeSource or Lions Gift of Sight sends a letter to the donor family that tells them a little about the people who get the organs, tissue, or eyes. It tells the donor family things like the person’s age, if they are a man or woman, and how their health has improved. Some donor families and recipients will write to the other without using names. When both sides wish to write directly or meet, LifeSource and/or Lions Gift of Sight will help them get together.

Resources for information about Organ, Tissue, and Eye Donation

These organizations can help you learn more about organ, tissue, and eye donation.

LifeSource

www.Life-Source.org

The non-profit organization dedicated to saving lives through organ and tissue donation in the Upper Midwest, serving communities in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and portions of western Wisconsin.

Lions Gift of Sight

www.lionsgiftofsight.org

This agency serves the community by providing donor eye tissue for transplant, research, and/or teaching, and by promoting donation through education.

Donate Life America

www.DonateLife.net

National information about organ and tissue donation.

Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA)

www.RestoreSight.org

A non-profit organization of eye banks dedicated to the restoration of sight; also accredits Eye Banks in the United States.

