



Donation Education for the Classroom

Fact Sheet Presentation

Common Questions

When it comes to organ, eye and tissue donation – there are many commonly asked questions. Find the facts and get the answers below!



Who can register to donate?

Every individual has the right to sign up to donate their organs, eyes and tissues at the time of their death. Anyone can register. Your age is not a factor. In fact, the oldest organ donor was 92!



What if I don't document my decision?

If you don't decide prior to your death whether or not you want to become an organ, eye and tissue donor, your loved ones will have the opportunity to make that decision on your behalf. Therefore, it is incredibly important to document and share your decision with your loved ones.



What does joining the Donor Registry mean?

When you register as an organ, eye and tissue donor you are making a legal decision* that will be honored after your death. It's important to talk with your family so they can be aware and prepared to honor your decision.

* Legal decision for individuals 18 and up



What if my family wants an open casket?

Organ, eye and tissue donors are heroes and are treated as such. The medical professionals who perform the recovery surgeries treat donors with the utmost respect, just like they would for any other patient. If you and your family were planning on an open casket funeral or viewing, these plans should not be affected by donation.



What if my family doesn't agree?

Donor Designation is a legal and binding decision for ages 18 and over. Legal guardians and parents of minors have the right to refuse donation even if a person under the age of 18 is a registered donor.

Common Questions

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How does the waiting list work?

When it comes to waiting for an organ transplant, we are all created equal. Wealthy or famous individuals cannot and do not get preference on the national transplant waiting list. Factors such as blood type, body size, location, severity of illness and length of time on the waiting list are used to determine the best candidate for an organ.

Waiting list factors include:

- Blood type
- Body size
- Severity of patient's medical condition
- Distance between the donor's hospital and the patient's hospital
- The patient's waiting time
- Whether the patient is healthy enough for surgery



How many people are waiting for a transplant in the U.S.?

Nationwide, there are over 100,000 people waiting for a life-saving organ transplant and more than 3,000 of those people are right here in Minnesota.



How many people can a single donor help heal and save?

One person can save and heal more than 75 lives through organ, eye and tissue donation. In some cases, tissue donation can increase this number significantly.



How do I register as a donor?

You can register as a donor online at DonateLifeMidwest.org, by mail, at the DMV when you get your permit or drivers license, or even through the iPhone Health app.

Eye Donation

Did you know that eye donation is actually the most common of all donations? Read below to learn more about the incredible gift of sight!



Who can become an eye donor?

Your health history may not prevent eye donation. People of all medical histories should consider themselves as potential eye donors. Those with LASIK surgery, poor eyesight, chronic illness and most cancers can still be potential eye donors.

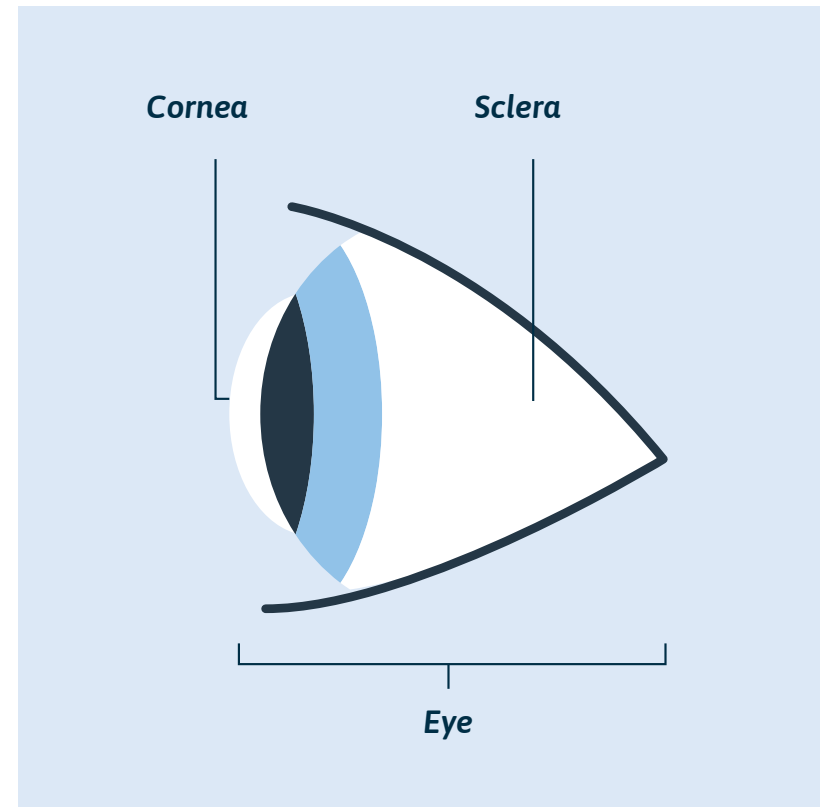


Which parts of the eye can be donated?

CORNEA – The cornea is the clear, dome-like window covering the front of the eye that allows the light to pass through to the retina, and enables us to see. A corneal transplant is a surgical procedure that replaces part of a person's cornea with corneal tissue from a donor. Cornea donation is necessary for the preservation and restoration of sight.

SCLERA – While the cornea is the only part of the eye regularly transplanted, the sclera (white of the eye) can also be used in some surgeries to repair disease or trauma to the eye.

EYE – The entire eye can be used for education and medical research.



Eye Donation

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Eye Donation by the Numbers

2,000,000

Since 1961, over 2 million people have had their eyesight restored through corneal transplants.

80,000

More than 80,000 people worldwide receive corneal transplants each year.

70,000

Over 70,000 people donate their eyes each year.

10

One eye donor alone can help heal up to 10 people through the cornea and sclera.

8

The sclera can be divided into eight parts and used to repair disease or trauma to the eye.

7

Every seven minutes someone receives a corneal transplant.

2

One person's corneas can be transplanted into two different people.

Myths vs. Facts

There are many common misconceptions about organ, eye and tissue donation. Read below to get the facts and set the record straight!



Myth: I'm too old to be a donor.

Fact: People of all ages and medical histories should consider themselves as potential donors. Your medical condition at the time of passing will determine what organs and tissue can be donated. Most health conditions do not prevent donation, and age is not a factor. In fact, the oldest organ donor ever was 92, and the oldest eye donor in Minnesota was 107!



Myth: I'm not healthy enough to be a donor.

Fact: Even with an illness or a health condition, you may be able to donate your organs and tissue upon death. At the time of death, doctors determine whether you are medically suitable for donation, and there are only a few conditions that would absolutely prevent a person from becoming a donor—such as active cancer or a systemic infection. Even people with diabetes, HIV, hepatitis and cancer CAN sometimes donate their organs.



Myth: Donation is against my religion.

Fact: All major religions in the United States support donation and consider it to be a generous and compassionate act of caring. Donation organizations coordinate with families and hospitals to make sure donors' beliefs, practices and ceremonies are always respected.

Facts vs. Myths

There are many common misconceptions about organ, eye and tissue donation. Read below to get the facts and set the record straight!



Myth: Organs are matched by race and ethnicity.

Fact: Although organs are not matched by race and ethnicity, and people of different races frequently match one another, all individuals waiting for an organ transplant will have a better chance of receiving one if there are large numbers of donors from their racial or ethnic background. This is because compatible blood types and tissue markers—critical qualities for donor and recipient matching—are more likely to be found among members of the same ethnicity. A greater diversity of donors may potentially increase access to transplantation for everyone.



Myth: Donation is expensive.

Fact: When it comes to donation, there is no cost to your family or loved ones. If you decide to be an organ, eye and tissue donor, the medical expenses associated with the donation will be covered.



Myth: If I'm a registered donor, they won't try as hard to save my life.

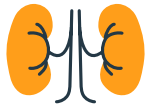
Fact: If you are taken to the hospital after an accident or injury, it is the hospital's number one priority to save YOUR life. Your status as a donor is not considered until every effort has been made to try to save your life. To be considered for organ donation, a patient must be on a ventilator and either declared brain dead or suffer cardiac death.

Organ Donation

Organ donation is a selfless decision to share the gift of life.
Read below to learn more about this incredible life-saving process!



What parts of the body can be donated?



Kidneys (2)



Lungs (2)



Heart



Liver



Intestines



Pancreas



Living vs. Deceased Donation

Many forms of donation take place after a donor passes away, but some organs can be shared by living donors. Deceased donations include: kidneys, liver, lungs, heart, pancreas and intestines. Living donations include: one kidney or part of the liver, lung, intestine or pancreas.

Organ Donation

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Organ Donation by the Numbers

100,000

In the U.S., over 100,000 people are waiting for life-saving organ transplants.

10,000

Every year, roughly 10,000 people end up becoming donors in the U.S.

3,000

In the upper Midwest, more than 3,000 people are in need of life-saving transplants.

48

The entire organ recovery process typically takes place in less than 48 hours.

22

Every day 22 people pass away while waiting for a transplant match.

10

Every 10 minutes a new person is in need of a transplant.

8

One donor can save up to 8 lives through organ donation.

1

Although anyone can register, only 1% of people actually qualify to become an organ donor after passing.

Tissue Donation

Tissue donations save and dramatically improve the quality of life for people who receive them. Read more below to learn more about the incredibly healing gift of tissue.



What tissue can be donated?

BONE TISSUE – hip, leg or rib tissue for orthopedic and reconstructive treatments

HEART VALVES – to repair defective valves and improve heart function

BLOOD VESSELS – to restore blood flow; often used for heart bypass, to make continued kidney dialysis possible, to re-establish circulation in a diabetic’s limb and to repair aneurysms

SKIN TISSUE – for burn patients, trauma, reconstruction and wound-care treatments

CONNECTIVE TISSUE – ligaments or tendons to increase or restore mobility



How does tissue donation help?

Bone, cartilage, veins, tendons, ligaments and heart valves can cover burns and stop infections, replace veins and mend damaged connective tissue and cartilage in recipients. For example, heart valves can save the lives of infants born with heart defects, and ligaments can repair torn ACLs.

Tissue Donation

Tissues save and dramatically improve the quality of life for the people who receive them. Read below to learn more about this incredible gift of healing!



Tissue Donation by the Numbers

1,500,000

Close to 1.5 million people benefit from tissue donation each year.

58,000

Each year, approximately 58,000 tissue donors provide life-saving and healing tissue for transplant.

75

Just one tissue donor can save and heal more than 75 lives!

24

Tissue donation must be initiated within 24 hours of a person's death.

5

Organs must be transplanted within hours of recovery, but tissue donations can be packaged and kept for up to five years.