



Common Questions & Answers About Donation



A Donate Life Organization

THE DONOR CARD

Q: How can I document my decision to be a donor?

A: **To be a donor, you should do two things:**

1. **Tell your family you would like to be a donor.**
2. **Sign and carry a donor card.**
3. **Mark “organ donor” on your driver’s license application.**

Q: Can I change my mind?

A: **Yes. If you do, just tear up your donor card and inform your family you do not want to be a donor.**

Q: How can I get a donor card?

A: **You can receive a donor card and information on organ and tissue donation by calling LifePoint @ 1-800-462-0755 or downloading it from www.lifepoint-sc.org.**

Q: Is the donor card a legal document?

A: **Yes, it is legal in all 50 states.**

Q: I would like to donate my body for anatomical study after I am dead. What do I do?

A: **Contact MUSC – Anatomical Gift Program - 843-792-3521**

AGE/ DISEASES

Q: Who can donate?

A: **Anyone over the age of 18 can indicate their desire to be a donor by signing a donor card and expressing their wishes to family. Relatives can also donate a deceased family member’s organs and tissues, including those family members under the age of 18.**

Q: Can I sign a donor card if I’m under 18 years of age?

A: **Yes, with your parent’s permission.**

Q: I’m 70 years old. Am I too old to be a donor?

A: **No matter what your age, you should carry a signed donor card and tell your family you want to be a donor. The appropriate medical specialist will make a decision when the time comes. You are never too old to help someone through donation.**

“You Have the Power to Donate LIFE. Be an Organ and Tissue Donor.”

www.lifepoint-sc.org or 1.800.462.0755



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Q: I have AIDS. Can I be a donor?

A: **Probably not, but each patient is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Previous illness is not necessarily a contraindication (rule-out) for donation. Individuals are encouraged to discuss donation as an option regardless of previous illness.**

Q: I've had cancer. Can I be a donor?

A: **An evaluation will be done at the time of death. It is likely that you will be a candidate for some type of donation. (Note: It varies on the cancer and how long the patient has been cancer-free.) Regardless, you should sign and carry a donor card, and make sure that your family is aware of your wishes.**

Q: I am a smoker. Can I be a donor?

A: **You may not be a candidate for heart/lung donation. If you are in good health otherwise, you would probably be considered as a donor for other organs. Sign your donor card and share your decision with your family.**

Q: I have diabetes and/or high blood pressure. Can I be a donor?

A: **Yes, it may be possible. But the appropriate medical specialist will decide at the time of death. It will depend on whether you had developed any related complications and how severe your condition was. Sign your donor card and share your decision with your family.**

FAMILY PERMISSION

Q: Why do I need to tell my family I want to be a donor?

A: **At the time of your death, your family will be asked if you ever expressed a wish to be an organ or tissue donor. It would be very reassuring to your family to know that they are able to carry out an important last desire of yours that would help others, even after your death.**

Q: Can my family (or spouse) refuse permission for organ donation even though I have signed an organ donor card?

A: **No. South Carolina's legislation honors "first-person" consent. Consent from the next-of-kin isn't required if a donor card, donor driver's license, living will, durable power of attorney, or other document of gift evidencing a gift of organs or tissue has been executed by the donor.**

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COST OF DONATION AND THE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Q: If I become an organ or tissue donor, who is responsible for my funeral costs and arrangements?

A: **Funeral plans will be made in the usual fashion. Organ donation may affect the timing of funeral arrangements. Costs for the donation of organs and tissues are paid for by the organ procurement organization. All funeral costs remain the responsibility of the donor's family.**

Q: Can I have an open casket funeral if I am a donor?

A: **Yes. The body of someone who has donated their organs or tissues (including cornea donation) is treated with respect, and is prepared for the funeral in the customary manner.**

Q: Will my family be charged for the costs of organ or tissue recovery?

A: **No. All costs associated with organ or tissue recovery will be handled by the organ procurement organization.**

ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION

Q: I've heard that emergency personnel are less likely to try to save your life if they know you are a potential donor. Is this true?

A: **No. If you are sick or injured, the number one priority is to save your life. Organ and tissue donation can only be considered after you are deceased and after your family has been consulted.**

Q: How do medical personnel determine who receives a transplant?

A: **Separate and specific criteria for the equitable allocation of each organ (heart, pancreas, lung, kidney, liver, and heart/lung) have been determined by experts and approved by the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN).**

Q: What are the most commonly donated organs?

A: **liver, heart, lungs, kidneys, pancreas, and intestine**

Q: What are the most commonly donated tissues?

A: **corneas, bone, bone marrow, cartilage, tendons, skin, fascia, and pericardium**

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Q: What is tissue donation?

A: **Tissue donation involves replacing tissues such as skin, bones, corneas, blood, and bone marrow. Blood transfusions were the first tissue transplants performed on humans. In the 1940s, surgeons developed procedures to replace human corneas, and, for the past several decades, transplantation technology has expanded in all areas.**

Q: Can you donate an organ while you are still alive?

A: **Yes, certain kinds of transplants can be achieved using living donors. For example, over 40 percent of all kidney transplants are performed with living donors. The donor is often related to the person needing the transplant, and can live a normal life with just one healthy kidney. Also, there are new methods of transplanting a part of a living adult's liver to a child who needs a liver transplant. Parts of a lung or pancreas from a living donor can also be transplanted. However, these types of partial transplants are rare. (Living Liver transplants = approx. 5%; Living Lung transplants = less than 1 %)**

Q: In order to be a potential living donor, what factors are considered?

A: **Age, function of the organ to be donated, absence of serious pathology, absence of transmissible infectious diseases, and absence of cancer are among the requirements that the living donor must fulfill along with undergoing a psychological test. (See Living Donation section of this manual for details.)**

Q: I am in good health. I would like to donate one of my kidneys to someone who needs it. Can I get paid for this?

A: **No. In the United States, it is illegal to receive or pay money for organs or tissues. Insurance companies, individuals, or the federal government will pay all costs for transplant-related services.**

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