

organdonor.gov

**U.S. Government
Information on Organ
Donation and
Transplantation**

The Deceased Donation Process

Even though millions of people have registered to become organ donors, very few of us die in a way that lets us share the gift of life. Learn how the organ donation process works.

Registering as a Donor

The process of donation most often begins with your consent to be a donor by registering in your state. Signing up does not guarantee you will be able to donate your organs, eyes, or tissues—and registering usually takes place many years before donation becomes possible. But it is the first step to being eligible to save lives.

Medical Care of Potential Donors

For someone to become a deceased donor, he or she has to die in very specific circumstances. Most often, a patient comes to a hospital because of illness or accident, such as a severe head trauma, a brain aneurysm or stroke.

The patient is put on artificial or mechanical support, which keeps blood with oxygen flowing to the organs. The medical team does everything possible to save the patient's life. At this point, whether or not the person is a registered donor is not considered.

Brain Death Testing

Even though the medical team members do everything they can to save the patient's life, sometimes the injuries are too severe and the patient dies.

If the patient is dead and is not responding, physicians will perform a series of tests to determine if brain death has occurred. A patient who is brain dead has no brain activity and cannot breathe on his or her own. Brain death is death and it is irreversible. Someone who is brain dead cannot recover.

Only after brain death has been confirmed and the time of death noted, can organ donation become a possibility.

The Organ Procurement Organization

The hospital notifies the local Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) of every patient that has died or is nearing death. This is in keeping with federal regulations.

The hospital gives the OPO information about the deceased patient to confirm whether he or she has the potential to be a donor. If the person could be a candidate for donation, a representative from the OPO travels immediately to the hospital.

Authorizing Donation

The OPO representative searches to see if the deceased is registered as a donor on their state registry. If so, that will serve as legal consent for donation.

If the deceased has not registered, and there was no other legal consent for donation, such as a notation on the driver's license, the OPO will ask the next of kin for authorization.

After authorization, a medical evaluation takes place, including obtaining the deceased's complete medical and social history from the family.

The Matching Process

If the deceased person's evaluation allows donation, the OPO contacts the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN).

The OPTN operates the national database of all patients in the U.S. waiting for a transplant. The OPO enters information about the deceased donor into the computer system and the search begins.

The computer system generates a list of patients who match the donor (by organ). Each available organ is offered to the transplant team of the best-matched patient.

The transplant surgeon determines whether the organ is medically suitable for that patient or may refuse the organ—for example, if the patient is too sick to be transplanted or cannot be reached in time.

Most organs go to patients in the area where the organs were recovered. The others are shared with patients in other regions of the country.

Recovering and Transporting Organs

While the search for matching recipients is under way, the deceased donor's organs are maintained on artificial support. Machines keep blood containing oxygen flowing to the organs. The condition of each organ is carefully monitored by the hospital medical staff and the OPO procurement coordinator.

A transplant surgical team replaces the medical team that treated the patient before death. (The medical team trying to save the patient's life and the transplant team are never the same team.)

The surgical team removes the organs and tissues from the donor's body in an operating room. First, organs are recovered, and then additional authorized tissues such as bone, cornea, and skin. All incisions are surgically closed. Organ donation does not interfere with open-casket funerals.

Organs remain healthy only for a short period of time after removal from the donor, so minutes count. The OPO representative arranges the transportation of the organs to the hospitals of the intended recipients. Transportation depends on the distance involved, and can include ambulances, helicopters, and commercial airplanes.

Transplanting the Organs

The transplant operation takes place after the transport team arrives at the hospital with the new organ. The transplant recipient is typically waiting at the hospital and may already be in the operating room awaiting the arrival of the lifesaving organ.

Surgical teams work around the clock as needed to transplant the new organs into the waiting recipients.

Organ Donation

If you save one life, it is as though you save the world.

—The Talmud

Live

well

Laugh

often

Love

much

and

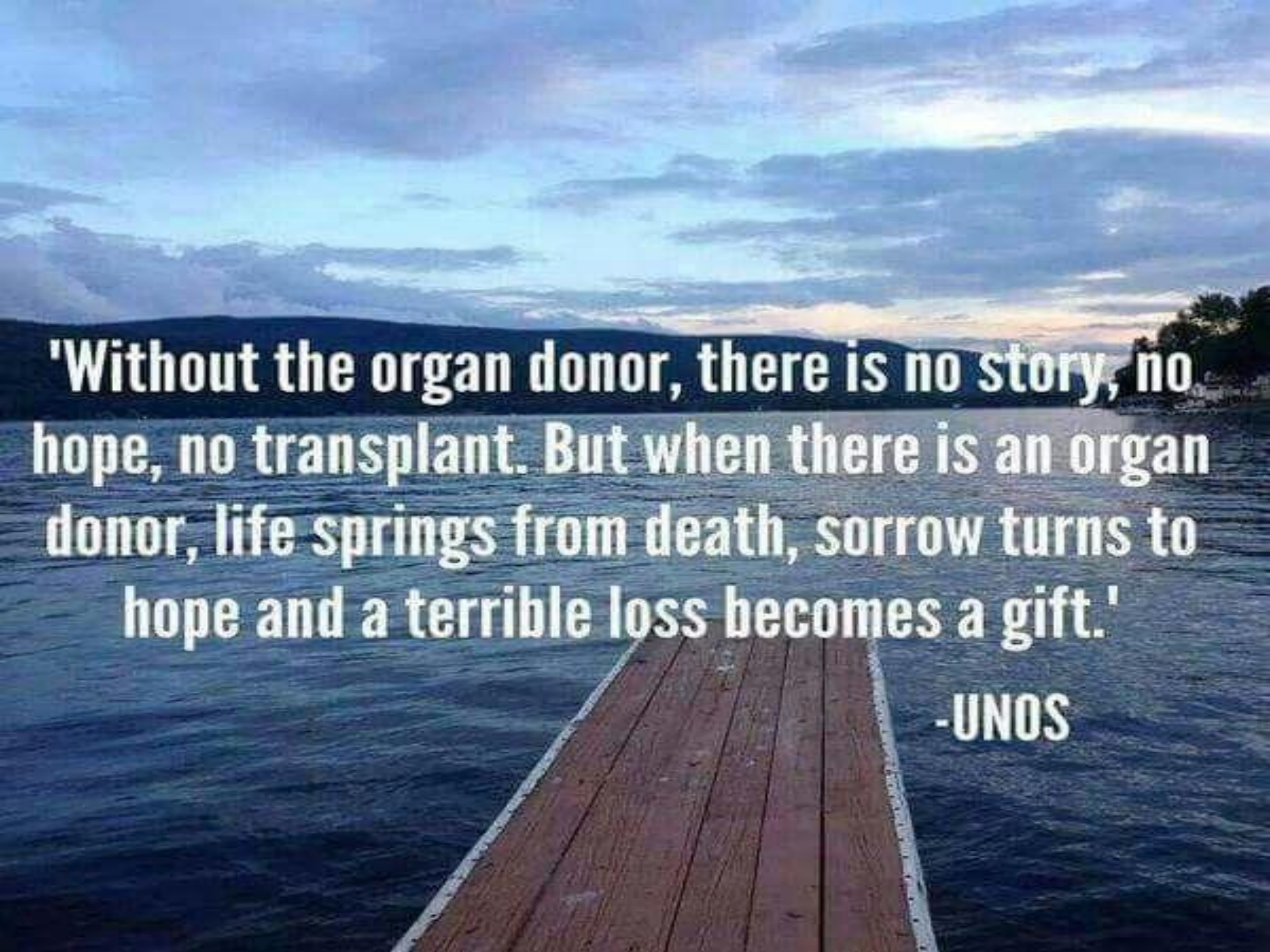
Donate Life



**IF YOU INSIST YOU WANT TO KEEP
YOUR ORGANS AFTER YOU DIE**



**I INSIST YOU SHOULD BE DENIED
A SPOT ON THE DONOR LIST
SHOULD YOU EVER NEED ONE**



'Without the organ donor, there is no story, no hope, no transplant. But when there is an organ donor, life springs from death, sorrow turns to hope and a terrible loss becomes a gift.'

-UNOS

"Without the organ donor, there is no story, no hope, no transplant. But when there is an organ donor, life springs from death, sorrow turns to hope and a terrible loss becomes a gift."

- UNOS

organ donation
is not a
tragedy

but it can be
a beautiful light
in the
midst of one.

The greatest **HERO**
I never knew
was the **ORGAN DONOR**
who saved
My **LIFE.**

BE A HERO. BE AN ORGAN DONOR.

1 ORGAN DONOR
CAN SAVE **8** LIVES.

IT ONLY TAKES **2** MINUTES FOR YOU TO REGISTER.

LEAVE A

LEGACY

OF LIFE

BE AN ORGAN DONOR

“ RECYCLE
ORGANS,
NOT JUST
COKE
CANS. ”

~ The Fresh Quotes ~



**KEEP
CALM
AND
DONATE
ORGANS**

“Give So Others
Can Live.”

~ The Fresh Quotes ~

~ * * DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES * *

~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES

~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES

**One Eye Donation
Can Make Two
Blind People *See.***

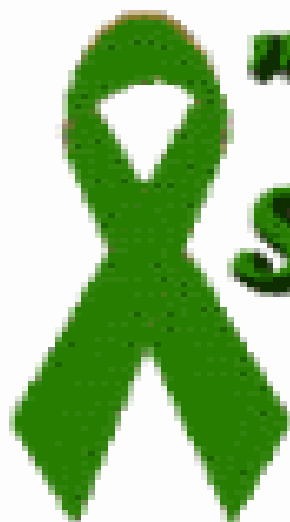
~ The Fresh Quotes ~

~ * * DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES ~ DONATE EYES * *



Don't think of organ donations as giving up part of yourself to keep a total stranger alive. It's really a total stranger giving up almost all of themselves to keep part of you alive.

(Anonymous)



*"Share Your Life.
Share Your Decision."*



*"Be A Hero.
Be An Organ Donor."*

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EVERY ORGAN
DONOR

"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."

- *Albert Einstein*



www.EveryOrganDonor.org

*I Am Somebody,
But Part
Of Me
Is Somebody
Else.*

The First Question

I HAVE
A HEART...
SAVE
A LIFE..

The Fresh Quotes

**WHEN YOU DIE YOUR ORGANS
WILL GO TO EITHER:**

- 1. THE GRAVE,**
- 2. THE CREMATORIUM,**
- 3. A HUMAN IN DESPERATE
NEED.**

YOU DECIDE

#OrganDonation

Be a living kidney donor...



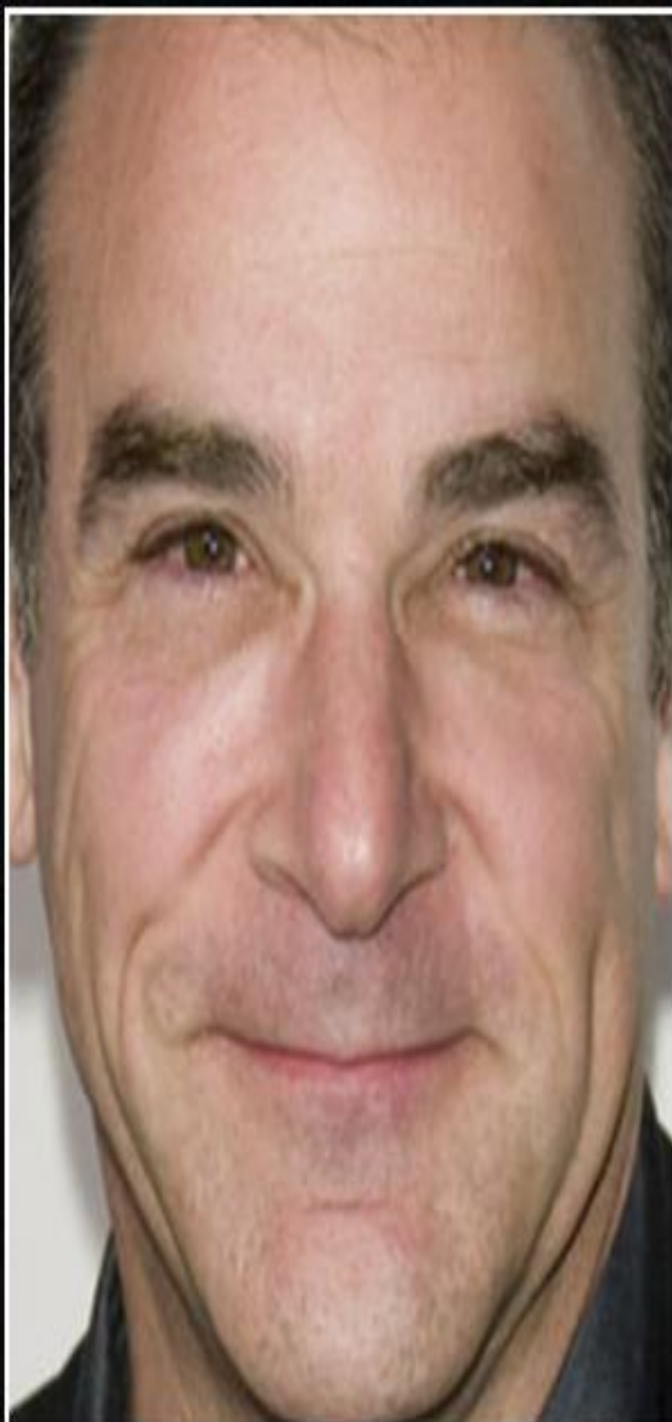
Share your spare!

LIVING TO TELL

Two hands are shown from the front, with fingers curved to form a heart shape. The hands are light-skinned and appear to be holding something together. The background is black, making the hands and the text stand out.

The Dallas Morning News
Stories
of lives saved
by organ
donation

By the editors
of **neighborsgo**



I'm blessed. I have a 13-year-old girl's eye and a 14 year-old boy's eye. I've been given the gift of sight by people who decided to donate organs. I try to do as much organ-donor work as I can.

— *Mandy Patinkin* —

AZ QUOTES



The gift that has been given to me says much about our capacity for great compassion and generosity, and I hope it sends an inspiring message to others about the importance of organ donation.

(Steven Cojocaru)

Donor Card

I would like to help someone
to live after my death.

Let your relatives know your wishes,
and keep this card with you at all times.

Organ donations give life

In 1954, the kidney was the first human organ to be transplanted successfully. Today there are many kinds of transplants, including heart, liver and lungs.

How many people receive an organ transplant each day:

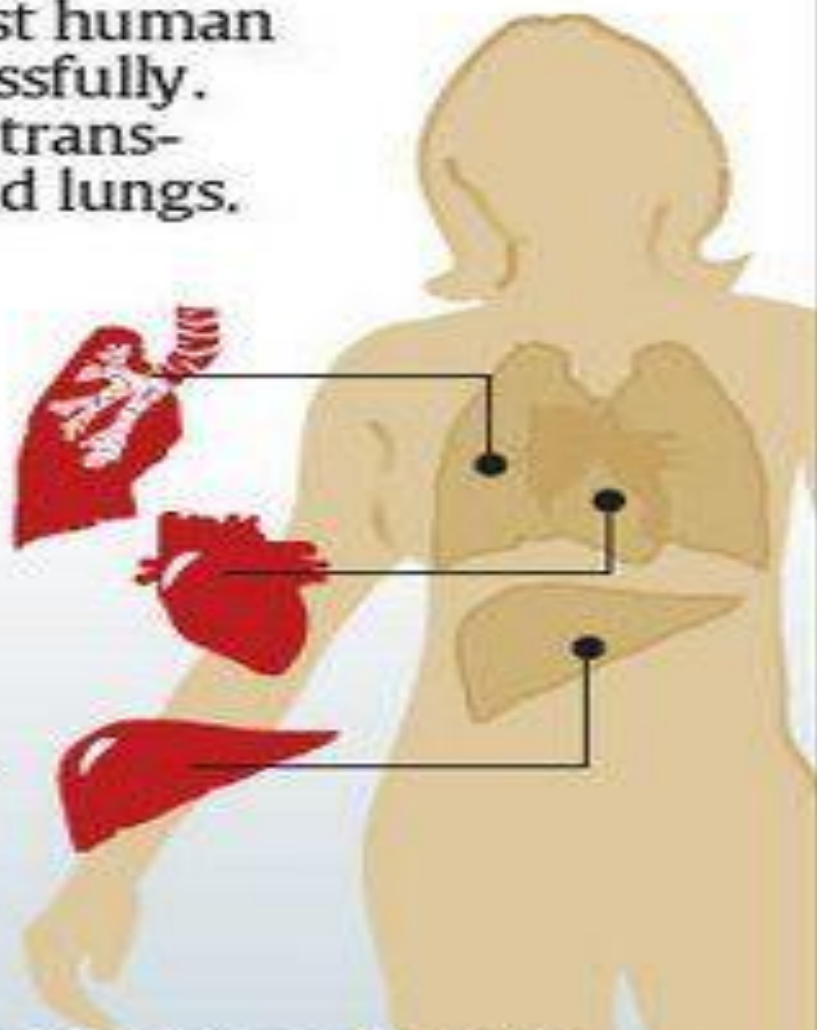
70

How many people die each day because of a shortage of organs:

16

Candidates on waiting list as of Feb. 2:

87,306



Facts About Organ Donation

- ▣ 100,000 men, women, and children are currently on the waiting list for an organ.
- ▣ Every 11 minutes, someone is added to the organ waiting list.
- ▣ Anyone can potentially be a donor.
- ▣ A deceased donor can give kidneys, pancreas, liver, lungs, heart and intestinal organs.
- ▣ A living donor can give a kidney, a portion of the liver, a lung or a part of the intestine.



**The measure of a life, after all,
is not its duration, but its
donation.**

Corrie Ten Boom



Life.. Pass it on...

Say Yes to Organ Donation



Thank
You...