



Organ and Tissue Donation Giving Life a Second Chance

Despite continuing efforts at public education, misconceptions about organ and tissue donation persist. It's a tragedy if even one person decides against donation because of inaccurate information. Following is a list of facts about organ and tissue donation designed to help people make an informed decision about donating after they have lived their lives.

Fact: Registering to be an organ and tissue donor will not affect my medical care if I am in an accident or need emergency care.

Explanation: If you are admitted to the hospital, the number one priority is to save your life. Organ and tissue donation are only considered after all life-saving efforts have failed. The doctors who work to save your life are not the same doctors involved with donation.

Fact: Organ and tissue donation is performed respectfully and does not disfigure the body.

Explanation: Organs and tissues are removed in an operation by trained medical personnel. Your body is treated with respect and an open casket funeral is possible after donation.

Fact: Most religions support donation.

Explanation: Most religions approve of donation or leave it to personal choice. Donation is considered an act of charity.

Fact: There is no financial cost for organ and tissue donation.

Explanation: There is no financial cost to the donor's family or estate for organ or tissue donation. Funeral costs remain the responsibility of the family.

Fact: Even if you have registered to be a donor, with the heart symbol on your driver's license, it is important to have a family conversation about your decision.

Explanation: While organ and tissue donation can legally occur with your donor registration, it is important to discuss your decision with your family to ensure they understand your wishes.

Fact: Individuals with health conditions and advanced age can still donate.

Explanation: People of all ages and medical histories should consider themselves potential donors. Medical professionals will review your history at the time of death to determine what organs and tissues can be donated.

Fact: The organ transplant waiting list is based on medical need, time waiting and compatibility with the donor.

Explanation: Many people are concerned about the fairness of the organ transplant waiting list and how recipients are selected. The sharing system is managed by the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) and is based on the severity of the illness, time spent waiting, blood type, and other important medical information.

You may document your decision to become an organ and tissue donor by saying "yes" when you get your driver's license or by registering at www.alabamaorgancenter.org. Be sure your family knows your decision to share the gift of life!

To learn more, call the Alabama Organ Center at [1-800-252-3677](tel:1-800-252-3677) or visit our website at www.alabamaorgancenter.org.

