

Questions and answers about organ donation

Who manages organ distribution?

The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) maintains the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN). UNOS matches organ donors to waiting recipients 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Will my medical treatment suffer if I am a donor?

Some people worry that if they are registered as a donor, their own medical treatment will suffer because their doctor will be more interested in their organs than in saving their life. However, organ donation is only considered after every effort has been made to save a patient's life.

Will my body be disfigured?

No. Donation does not disfigure the body or interfere with burial arrangements. It is still possible to have an open casket funeral. A highly skilled surgical team will remove the organs and tissues in the hospital, leaving the body intact.

Will my family have to pay a fee if I donate my organs?

No. A donor's family or estate will never be billed for any costs related to the organ donation process.

Information included in this brochure provided by the New York State Department of Health, The NYS Donate Life Registry, LiveOnNY and the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network. This brochure offers a general overview of information to help you better understand the topic. There may be new or changed legislation since this brochure's publication date. It is not a substitute for the text of the law or legal advice.



Dear Friend,

Nearly 10,000 New Yorkers are waiting in hope of a life-saving organ transplant, according to the New York State Donate Life registry, but there aren't enough donors to meet the overwhelming need. Just one organ donor can save up to eight lives and help as many as 75 more through additional tissue and cornea donations.

Deciding to become an organ donor is a personal decision. This brochure answers some common questions about organ donation and how to register as a donor. For more information, please visit donatelife.ny.gov or call **1-866-NY-DONOR** (693-6667). As always, don't hesitate to contact my office if I can further help with this or any other issue.

Sincerely,

Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly

District Office:
250 Broadway, Suite 2301
New York, NY 10007
212-312-1400

Albany Office:
Room 932, LOB
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-3791

speaker@nyassembly.gov

Updated 4/26

Organ donation

It's a gift of life



Important information
from Speaker of
the Assembly
Carl E. Heastie

The invaluable gift of donation



Deceased donation is the process of giving organs, corneas or tissues upon your death for the purpose of transplantation. These gifts can give new hope to people with life-threatening diseases

or organ injuries. Currently, there is a severe shortage of organs for lifesaving transplants.

Organ donations can include: heart, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, liver and intestines. Tissue donations may include: eyes or corneas, skin, bone, ligament, blood vessels, nerve, cartilage and connective tissues.

- A heart, pancreas, liver, lung or intestine transplant can save a life.
- A kidney can free a person from a lifetime of dependence on regular dialysis treatments.
- Corneas can give someone sight.
- Donated bones can prevent amputation in patients suffering from cancer.
- Tendons and cartilage can replace tissue lost or injured due to trauma, disease or infection.
- Donated skin tissue can save the life of a severe burn victim.



Understanding the donation process

Deceased donation can only occur after death has been declared by medical professionals who are not part of the donation and transplant process.

If there is no donate life directive in place at the time of death, established medical procedure requires a request for donation be made of the next of kin. In order of priority, legal next of kin are:

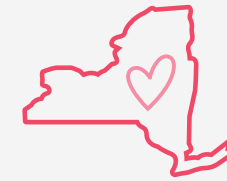
- Your health care agent
- Your spouse, if you are not legally separated, or your domestic partner
- Your child who is 18 or older
- Either of your parents
- A sibling who is 18 or older
- A guardian appointed by the court prior to the donor's death

If donation is agreed to, the donor's organs, tissues and eyes (as consented to) will be matched with people waiting for transplants.

Potential recipients will be identified based upon many factors, including blood type, body size and severity of illness. Factors such as race, gender, age and income are not considered when determining who receives a transplant.

Once matches are confirmed, the donated organs are carefully recovered from the donor and sent for transplantation.

The New York State Donate Life™ Registry



New Yorkers age 16 and older can record their consent to be an organ, eye or tissue donor by enrolling in the New York State Donate Life™ Registry. You may

specify which organs or tissues you consent to donate upon your death and for what purpose (transplantation, research or both.)

Once enrolled, you can change your consent or remove your name from the Registry at any time.

Easy ways to enroll:

- Go to donatelife.ny.gov/register to enroll online in minutes.
- Download a form from donatelife.ny.gov/download-forms and return the completed form by email or postal mail to the address listed online.
- Register through a DMV transaction when you obtain or renew your learner permit, driver license or non-driver ID in New York State. Visit dmv.ny.gov for details and other eligible transactions.
- Complete the optional section on the New York State Voter Registration Form when you register to vote. Visit elections.ny.gov for more information on voter registration.
- Look for the organ donor registration question when you enroll or manually renew health insurance through the New York State of Health Official Health Plan Marketplace. Visit nystateofhealth.ny.gov to learn more.

Visit donatelife.ny.gov or call **1-866-NY-DONOR (693-6667)** for more information.