

**Q: Why are organs and tissues needed?**

A: There is a severe shortage of organs and tissues for transplantation. In addition to those New Yorkers awaiting organ transplants, more than 20,000 others await tissue donations for lifesaving transplants, as in the case of burn and cancer patients. Without these surgeries they will die or remain disabled. Transplants give people a chance to resume full, productive lives.

**Q: Why was an Organ and Tissue Donor Registry established?**

A: In the absence of a signed donor card or driver’s license, a person’s family is asked to consent to donation. Many family members do not consent because they are unaware of their loved one’s wishes. The New York State Organ and Tissue Donor Registry provides a place for you to record your wish to become a donor upon your death. The Registry ensures that this information will be provided to your family members if they are called upon to make a decision regarding donation.

**Q: Who can become a donor?**

A: Anyone can decide to become a donor. A person’s medical history or age does not automatically exclude him or her from becoming a donor.

**Q: How do I enroll in the Organ and Tissue Donor Registry?**

A: You will be enrolled automatically if you check the donor box on your driver license or nondriver identification (ID) card application or renewal form. Or, you can complete and mail the attached enrollment card. You can also enroll through the State Health Department’s web site, [www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us).

**Q: What happens when I say “yes” to enrollment?**

A: Enrollment in the Organ and Tissue Donor Registry declares your intent to donate your organs and tissues after your death. In the event of your death, the local organ procurement organization or tissue bank will inform your family of your decision. Your family will still have to give consent, so it is important that you tell them about your wishes to become a donor. Fill out the attached Family Discussion Card and give it to your family.

**Q: If I enroll in the Organ and Tissue Donor Registry, should I still sign the back of my driver license?**

A: Yes, you should still sign the back of your driver license or non-driver ID card. This will help to ensure that your wishes will be carried out.

**Q: Can I change my mind after I enroll?**

A: Yes. If you decide you do not want to become an organ or tissue donor and you want your name removed from the Organ and Tissue Donor Registry, write to: New York State Organ and Tissue Donor Registry, New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Standards Development, 433 River Street, Hedley Park Place, 6th Floor, Troy, New York 12180. If you signed the back of your driver license or non-driver ID card, just cross out the information. Make sure to tell your health care provider and your family that you’ve changed your mind.

**Q: If I enroll in the Organ and Tissue Donor Registry, will medical care be compromised?**

A: No. Donation is only considered after all efforts to save the patient have failed and the patient has died. Saving the patient’s life is the health care provider’s first priority.

**Q: What will happen to my donated organs or tissues?**

A: When someone dies, the local organ procurement organization or tissue bank matches the donor’s organs, tissues and eyes with people waiting for transplants. Patients who receive your organs will be identified based upon many factors, including blood type, severity of illness and other medical criteria. Other factors, such as race, gender, age and income are not considered when determining who receives an organ.

**Q: How do donor families feel about their loved one’s decision?**

A: Consenting to donation helps some families deal with the loss of a loved one. Knowing that something good will come from their loss can be a great source of comfort.

**Q: Will my family know the recipient of my organs or tissues?**

A: The local organ procurement organization or tissue bank can give your family some information, such as the recipient’s age, gender, profession, etc. But they do not usually reveal the identity of the recipient. Meetings between the organ donor and recipient families can sometimes be arranged, if both parties agree to it.

**Q: Are there any costs to my family for donating my organs or tissues?**

A: No. There are no costs for your family if you donate your organs and tissues.

**Q: Can there still be a funeral service with the body present?**

A: Yes. Donation will not affect the funeral service.

**Q: Can there be an open-casket viewing?**

A: Usually, an open-casket viewing can occur. However, the funeral director may need additional time to prepare the body.

**Q: What does my religion say about organ and tissue donation?**

A: Many religions approve of organ and tissue donation and transplantation, and even encourage it. They believe it is the most significant gift one human being can give to another. If you have any questions, discuss them with your religious or spiritual leader.

**Every day, 13 people are added to waiting lists for organ transplants. Ten percent are New York State residents. Thousands more are waiting for tissue transplants.**

**One person who donates organs (hearts, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas and intestines) can save up to eight lives, while a tissue donor (corneas, bone, skin, heart valves, tendons, veins, etc.) can improve 12 or more lives by restoring eyesight, helping fight infections in burn patients and preventing the loss of mobility and disability.**

**Each year in New York State, more than 1,500 kidneys, livers and hearts are transplanted thanks to hundreds of donors. However, with more than 8,000 New Yorkers still on waiting lists, the need for organ donations far exceeds the supply.**

### Enrollment Form

To register, please complete and mail this enrollment form to:

**Sight Society of Northeastern NY  
Lions Eye Bank at Albany  
6 Executive Park Drive  
Albany, NY 12203**

### Please Print

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

9-digit Motor Vehicle license or  
non-driver license ID number: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_ Female

Height: \_\_\_\_ feet \_\_\_\_ inches

Eye Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to be listed in the New York State Organ and Tissue Donor Registry maintained by the State Department of Health to record my intent to donate my organs and tissues in the event of my death. I authorize the State Department of Health to share this information with federally regulated organ procurement organizations and New York State-licensed tissue banks and hospitals at the time of my death.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

### Family Discussion Card

Give this card to your family to tell them about your decision.



Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I want you to know about my decision to become an organ and tissue donor. Upon my death, if I am a candidate for organ or tissue donation, I would like you to respect my wishes. It is important to me that others are given the opportunity to live a full and productive life. Thank you for carrying out my wishes.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Donor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### When you decide to donate your organs and tissues:

- Your heart could beat for someone else.
- Your lungs could breathe for someone else.
- Your kidneys could free two people from dialysis.
- Your liver could save the life of a patient awaiting a transplant.
- Your corneas could give sight to two people.
- Your bones could help repair other people's damaged joints.
- Your skin could help heal burn victims.

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### For more information

Call an organ procurement organization listed below:

Albany (800) 256-7811

Buffalo (800) 227-4771

New York City area (800) GIFT-4-NY  
(443-8469)

Rochester/Syracuse (800) 810-5494

or the  
New York State Organ and  
Tissue Donor Registry at 1-866-NYDONOR  
(693-6667)

To register online, visit  
<http://www.nyhealth.gov>

State of New York  
George E. Pataki, Governor  
Department of Health  
Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H., Commissioner  
2853 10/05



**Be an organ and  
tissue donor.  
Enroll in the  
New York State  
Organ and Tissue  
Donor Registry.**