



# SHARING A STORY ABOUT ORGAN DONATION



Facts & Stats

## Donate Life America Mission

To increase the number of donated organs, eyes and tissues available to save and heal lives, while developing a culture where donation is embraced as a fundamental human responsibility.

## Donate Life America Goals

To motivate the public to register as organ, eye and tissue donors; provide education about living donation; own and manage the National Donate Life Registry at **RegisterMe.org**; develop and execute effective multi-media campaigns to promote donation, and own, manage and promote Donate Life<sup>SM</sup>, the national symbol and brand for the cause of donation.

## Key Messages & Calls to Action

- Register as an organ donor today
- Ways to register:
  - Sign up online at RegisterMe.org
  - Check “yes” when you renew your driver’s license
  - Register in your iPhone Health App
- 1 organ donor can save 8 lives
- 1 cornea donor can restore sight to 2 people
- 1 tissue donor can heal more than 75 others

Questions? Contact [media@DonateLife.net](mailto:media@DonateLife.net)

## Important Messages About Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation and Transplantation

- Nationally, more than 100,000 people are waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant.
- Every day, 16 people die waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant.
- Only 3 in 1,000 people die in a way that allows for deceased organ donation. That’s why every donor registration counts.
- You are more likely to need a transplant in your lifetime than you are to be a donor after you pass away.
- Sometimes there is a complete and irreversible loss of brain function. The patient is declared clinically and legally dead. Only then is donation an option.
- Anyone, regardless of age or medical history, can sign up to be a donor. There is a medical evaluation at the time of death, so don’t rule yourself out of saving and healing lives.
- Myths about donation can keep people from registering as donors.
- Your life always comes first. Doctors work hard to save every patient’s life.
- Organ, eye and tissue donation does not interfere with an open casket funeral. Throughout the entire process, the body is treated with care and respect.
- All major religions support donation as a final act of generosity and compassion.
- Registering relieves a major stressor from your family because they’ll know exactly what you wanted.
- Donation gives your family a legacy they can find strength and comfort in, should the unthinkable happen.

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# Top 10 Tips for Reporting on Donation and Transplantation

- 1.** In language, tone and images used, be mindful and respectful. The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Code of Ethics calls on reporters to “Do No Harm” by treating all story subjects as human beings deserving of respect and compassion. In accordance with this principle, we recommend against using imagery of operating rooms and surgical procedures as well as words like “cadaver” and phrases such as “pull the plug.”
- 2.** Don’t use the stigmatizing or offensive words “harvest” or “harvesting;” instead, use “recover” or “organ recovery.”
- 3.** Refrain from using “life-support” in a story about donation. Because organ donation only occurs after all lifesaving efforts have been exhausted, the correct term is “ventilated support.”
- 4.** Organ donation is a rare and generous event. When a story on organ donation or transplant does not include a call to action to register as a donor or a mention of the donor’s generous gift, the public is left with an overly simplistic understanding of organ donation and transplantation.
- 5.** Always conclude a donation/transplantation related story with an opportunity for viewers, listeners and readers to register as an organ donor: “Register your decision to be an organ, eye and tissue donor at **RegisterMe.org** or check the box on your next trip to the DMV.” Custom registration links can also be created for a story, station, newspaper, et al.
- 6.** Transplants don’t happen without the generosity of a donor and/or a donor family who made the choice to give the gift of life. When reporting a story focused on an organ recipient, please take the opportunity to honor the gift given: “This story is possible because of the generosity of an organ [cornea or tissue] donor.”
- 7.** Recognize the media’s role as the most visible source of organ donation information in the country and the responsibility that comes with your role. Actively share the hopeful message that organ donation saves lives and refrain from perpetuating myths that would keep people from registering as organ donors.
- 8.** Rely only on donation and transplant professionals to provide technical details about donation and transplantation. Donation and transplantation can be overwhelming for a family and the process of organ recovery and allocation is complex. Very often, during these highly traumatic times, patients and loved ones – some facing the possibility of an unfathomable tragedy – may need time to fully comprehend an intricate and complicated diagnosis.
- 9.** HIPAA laws require hospitals, recovery organizations, Donate Life America, and its partners to obtain written permission before releasing any information to the media. Although we welcome stories that highlight donation’s truest heroes, donors and their families, please understand that we have a duty to transplant recipients and donor families, who may find media attention intrusive and compounding their grief. Also, the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) recommends that journalists ask themselves, “Does the public have a justifiable need to know or is this matter just one where some want to know?” as they balance this public need to know with an individual’s right to HIPAA privacy.
- 10.** Stories with sensationalized or inaccurate information are damaging to the public trust, to those awaiting transplantation, and to the honor of donors and donor families who have given the gift of life. If ever in doubt, please contact **media@DonateLife.net** for more information or to talk to an expert.



Learn more at [DonateLife.net](https://www.donatelife.net).