

Organ & Tissue Donation

Organ and tissue donation is a personal choice. Share your decision with your family.

Prepared by McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) Nurse Clinicians: Wendy Sherry & Bernard Tremblay in collaboration with Canadian Blood Services

What is organ and tissue donation?

Organ and tissue donation is a choice that you can make to help others regain their health. Organ donation saves lives by replacing unhealthy organs with healthy ones. Tissue donation helps people live better lives by improving their sight or preventing infections after a severe burn.

Donated organs and tissues are given to the people who need them most. Race, gender, income or celebrity status do not influence who receives donated organs and tissue.

Care and respect for your body are an important part of the donation process. Organs are removed during a surgery in the hospital operating room and brought to the person in need. The tissue and eyes are then removed. Open casket funeral arrangements remain an option.

Which organs and tissues can be donated?

The organs and tissues that can be donated are:

Organs

Heart, lungs, pancreas, pancreas islet cells, liver, kidneys, stomach and small bowels

Tissues

Corneas, sclera, skin, heart valves, bone, and tendons

Who can donate?

Everyone is eligible, from birth to older adults. The organ or tissue donation organization will evaluate each case to decide which organs and tissues are possible to donate.

Talking about one's eventual death can be difficult, not only for yourself but also for your family.

Can I still donate if I am ill?

A medical condition or serious illness does not exclude you as a potential organ donor. All potential donors are evaluated on an individual, medical, case-by-case basis when the time comes.

When should I start thinking about this?

It can be difficult to talk about dying while you're still living. But talking about your decision to register to become an organ and tissue donor is extremely important. Your loved ones must give consent to honour your wishes at the end of your life; if you've already talked about it, it's easier for them to do the right thing.

If you are considering donation, talk to your family doctor or your provincial donation program.

How can I donate?

How to register to be an organ and tissue donor in your province:

- <https://www.donateyourorgans.ca/#register>

No matter what your decision may be, you will always receive appropriate medical care. Talk to your family about whether or not you want to donate. Your choice will always be respected.

Please remember that donation can only occur once you are pronounced dead by the Doctor.

Your decision to donate your organs and tissue at the end of your life helps others keep on living until the end of theirs.

For more information, please email us at OTDT@blood.ca.