



Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I donate?

About 3,200 people are waiting for a life-saving organ in Michigan today. Nationwide, the number stands at 115,000. In the United States, 22 people die each day because an organ transplant was not available in time. There is an especially critical need for hearts, livers and kidneys. Your decision to someday donate your organs could save up to 8 lives. Your tissue can ease the pain and improve the lives of up to 75 more sick, injured and blind people.

Who can become a donor?

All of us have the potential to become a donor, regardless of age or medical conditions. There's no age limit for organ donation (people in their 90s have become donors). Some medical conditions could make your heart or kidneys non-transplantable, for example, but your pancreas or liver could help someone on the waiting list. Donors with some medical conditions, such as hepatitis or HIV, may be able to save the lives of waiting patients with the exact same diagnosis. Medical criteria for organ donation changes as medical advances occur; all potential donors are evaluated at the time of death to determine what can be used to help others.

> *Because of the critical need for organs, more people are deciding to become living donors. Most living donors offer a kidney to save a life, but part of a lung or a section of liver also can be donated. Living organ donations are not coordinated by Gift of Life.*

Why is it important to register as a donor?

Your gift will be used to help others through transplantation, therapy, research and education. If you register to become a donor, you relieve your grieving family of having to make a decision when you die. Having your wishes documented also ensures that your decision to donate will be carried out, if medically possible.

How do I sign up?

You can do so online at www.golm.org, by visiting any Secretary of State branch office or by calling Gift of Life at 866.500.5801. It takes less than a minute to sign up.

Can I indicate specific organs or tissues to be donated?

The Donor Registry does not track limitations because the types of organs and tissues used for transplantation and research changes regularly. However, you can upload your end-of-life decisions to Michigan's Peace of Mind Registry (www.mipeaceofmind.org), and include any limitations in that document, which Gift of Life also accesses at the time of donation.

Will doctors work as hard to save my life if they know I'm a donor?

Yes, absolutely. This is probably the most common myth about organ donation. Every effort to save your life will be made before donation is considered or even discussed. By law, the medical team treating you is completely separate from the transplant team.

How much does it cost to donate?

Nothing. It won't cost your estate or your family anything if your organs and tissue are transplanted. All costs related to the donation are covered by Gift of Life Michigan.

Will I still be able to have an open casket at the funeral?

Yes, neither organ nor tissue donation need interfere with open casket memorials.

Will my religion approve of donation?

Most major religions approve of organ, tissue and eye donation and consider it one of the highest acts of compassion and generosity.

> *View a list of specific religious organizations and their positions on donation here: organdonor.gov/about/donors/religion.html*

Can minors register to donate?

Yes, but until they turn 18, their parents would have the ultimate say in whether they become an organ donor. Once the minor turns 18, their donor registration is legally binding unless they request to have their name removed.

Can I donate my body to science/medicine and also be an organ donor?

Donating your whole body to science/medicine is a separate contract between you and a medical school. Please inquire with your local medical school to see if they will accept a whole body after organ/tissue/cornea donation. To the best of our knowledge, the only medical school in Michigan which will accept a whole body after organ, tissue and eye donation is the University of Michigan.

