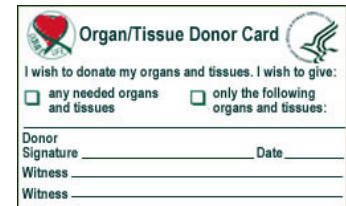


# Save a Life – Be an Organ Donor



## Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about this subject? What questions do you have?

Definitions: Organs that can be donated - heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas, intestines

Tissues that can be donated – skin, bone, ligaments, tendons, veins, heart valves, corneas

Transplant – to transfer an organ or body part from one person to another by an operation

Urgent – needing to be taken care of right away

## Reading

Each day about 74 people receive organ transplants. Nineteen people die each day waiting for transplants that cannot take place because of the shortage of donated organs. Make an informed decision about organ and tissue donation. Don't let **myths** and rumors keep you from saving lives. Learn the facts.

There are some situations from which people will not recover. People cannot recover from brain death. It is final. Brain death and coma are not the same. People can recover from comas.

The medical staff trying to save lives is separate from the transplant team. All efforts to save a life need to be exhausted before transplant surgeons are called in. Every effort is made to save a life before donation is considered, even if doctors know the patient wishes to be a donor.

Organs are matched by a computerized matching system. It does not select recipients based on fame or wealth. Organs are matched by blood and tissue typing that can vary by race. Patients are more likely to find matches among donors of their same race. Organs are also matched by organ size, medical urgency, and waiting time.

There are no age limits for who can donate. People of all ages may be donors. Physical condition, not age, is important. Newborns as well as senior citizens have been organ donors.

Persons younger than 18 years of age must have a parent's **consent**.

The donor's family does not pay for the cost of organ donation. All costs of organ and tissue donation are paid by the recipient. Organs cannot be bought or sold in the U.S.; it is illegal. Violators of this federal law are subject to prison time and fines.

How can you become a life saver? Where can you sign-up to be an organ donor? You can indicate your intent to be a donor on your driver's license. If you don't drive, you can complete a donor card ([www.organdonor.gov](http://www.organdonor.gov)) and carry it in your wallet. It is important to tell your doctor and loved ones your donation wishes.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – [www.organdonor.gov](http://www.organdonor.gov)

**Level 6.0**

## Understanding

1. How are organs matched? Who does it? What factors are considered? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What are **myths**? How can they impact a person's behavior? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. Will we ever see organs and tissue for sale on eBay? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. How can you become an organ donor? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Who performs the transplants? \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. Why should people of all ages and races consider organ donation? \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. What is **consent**? Who needs it to be a donor? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Are you an organ donor? Why or why not?

Option C: What new information have you learned? How has it influenced your thoughts on organ donation?

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