

BECOMING AN ORGAN DONOR

Nearly 1,000 Kentuckians are currently waiting for a life-saving organ donation. In honor of National Donate Life Month, take some time this April to think about becoming an organ donor.

If you're interested in becoming an organ donor, but not sure exactly what it entails, check out our frequently asked questions below.

How many people are waiting for an organ transplant?

More than 115,000 people nationally are currently waiting for an organ transplant. About 134 people are added to the waiting list each day – one every 10 minutes. Although approximately 80 organ transplants take place every day, on average, 22 patients die each day while waiting because the organ they needed did not become available in time.

What is the difference between organ and tissue donation?

Organ donation involves the transplantation of solid organs, such as the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver and pancreas. However, tissue donation is also extremely important. More than 1 million tissue transplants are done

nationally each year, and the surgical need for tissue has been steadily rising.

Examples of tissue that can be donated include skin, bone, heart valves, blood vessels and even corneas. These donated tissues can make a huge difference in the quality of life for many patients.

What is “living donation?”

Although most donations will take place after the donor is deceased, it is possible for a living person to donate some organs or tissues. The most common is living kidney donation – because humans have two kidneys, it is possible for a person to donate one kidney. Additionally, lobes of the liver or lungs can be given by a living donor. Tissues that can be donated by a living donor include skin, bone marrow and blood stem cells.

Most living donations take place between family or close friends, but sometimes they do take place between complete strangers.

Am I too old to become an organ donor?

No. You can sign up to be an organ donor, regardless of your age or medical history. The transplant team will determine at the

time of your death whether your organs are healthy enough to be donated.

If I'm a donor, will doctors try to save my life?

Yes! If you're admitted to the hospital, your doctor's priority is your health and well-being. Donation will not be considered until all other lifesaving options have been pursued.

How can I become an organ donor?

The best way to become an organ donor is to join the Organ Donor Registry. You can do this at the DMV when you renew your driver's license, or join online anytime at donatelifekey.org.

A single donor can save or improve the lives of more than 50 people through organ and tissue donation. It only takes minutes to join the registry, and your decision could give the gift of life to a patient in dire need.