

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who can be an organ, eye and tissue donor?

All individuals can register their intent to be a donor. Please do not rule yourself out for age or any medical issue or condition. A medical assessment will take place at the time of death to determine whether donation is a possibility.

2. How do I become a registered organ, eye, and tissue donor?

There are a few different ways to register:

- Say “yes” to donation when receiving or renewing your driver’s license.
- **Alaska residents** can register online at www.alaskadonorregistry.org or call Life Alaska Donor Services at 1-800-719-LIFE (5433) and request a brochure to fill out.
- **Idaho residents** can register online at www.yesidaho.org or call the Idaho Donor Registry toll-free at 1-866-937-4324 and request a brochure to fill out.
- **Montana and Washington residents** can register online at www.lcnw.org or call LifeCenter Northwest toll-free at 1-877-275-5269 and request a brochure to fill out and return.

3. Is there any cost to the family for donation?

There is no cost to the donor’s family for organ, eye and tissue donation. **All costs related to donation are paid by the donation agency.** Expenses related to saving the individual’s life and funeral expenses remain the responsibility of the donor’s family.

4. What if an individual registered to be a donor, but their family is opposed to donation?

Being a registered donor means you have given first person authorization for donation and transplantation. No one can override your registration and donation choice. LifeCenter Northwest works closely with donor families to support them through the donation process and to honor the gift of life that is being given. We suggest that people talk to their families about their donation choice in advance as it can be helpful to their family to know their wishes about being a donor.

5. Will being a registered donor affect the medical care I receive at the hospital?

No! Hospital and emergency personnel are only concerned with saving your life. They do not have access to the confidential donor registry database to even check for donor registration, nor do they make *any* determination as to whether someone is able to donate. The local organ recovery organizations’ medical team will assess for donation suitability *only* after all lifesaving measures and treatment has been given.

6. Can organs, eyes and tissue be given to different ethnic groups or individuals of the opposite sex?

Transplantation can exceed these boundaries; however, transplant success rates increase when organs are matched between members of similar ethnic backgrounds. Currently, ethnic minorities are in desperate need of more organ, eye and tissue donors, as they represent nearly 60% of the national organ transplant waiting list, but only 30% of actual donors.

7. Are organs bought and sold on the black market?

According to the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act of 1984, human organs, eyes, or tissue cannot be bought or sold in the U.S. Violators are subject to fines and imprisonment. All organ, eye and tissue recovery agencies are strictly regulated by the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS).

8. Are there religious objections to donation?

Most major religions support donation as a humanitarian act of giving. Transplantation is consistent with the life-preserving traditions of these faiths.

9. What is the legal age of registration?

The legal age to register to be an organ, eye and tissue donor varies from state to state:

Washington:

- At the age of 15 ½, you can register yourself to be a donor. This designation will continue for you even when you turn 18 years old.
- Prior to turning 15 ½, your parent/guardian can register you to be a donor. When you turn 18 years old, you must register for yourself.
- Before you turn the age of 18, a parent/guardian can revoke consent *only* at the time of donation.

Montana

- At the age of 15, you can register yourself to be a donor. This designation will continue for you even when you turn 18 years old.
- Prior to turning 15, your parent/guardian can register you to be a donor. This designation will continue for you even when you turn 18 years old.
- Before you turn the age of 18, a parent/guardian can revoke consent *only* at the time of donation.