Organ Transplantation
Questions and Answers

WHAT ORGANS CAN BE TRANSPLANTED?
Donated kidneys, hearts, lungs, livers, pancreases, and intestines can be transplanted.

WHAT TISSUES CAN BE TRANSPLANTED?
Blood vessels, bone marrow, connective tissue, corneas, heart valves, middle ears, and skin are among the tissues that can be transplanted.

WHO DECIDES WHO RECEIVES DONATED ORGANS?
The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network matches donated organs with critically ill patients on the national waiting list. Medical urgency, compatibility of blood chemistries, and body size are considerations in making the match.

DOES THE DONOR FAMILY MEET THE RECIPIENT?
Most donor families are told the age, sex, occupation, and other general characteristics of the recipient. If both the donor family and the recipient agree, they may exchange names, correspond, and even meet.

MUST I HAVE MEDICAL TESTS TO REGISTER AS AN ORGAN AND TISSUE DONOR?
No testing is needed before you sign a donor card or designate “organ donor” on your driver's license. At the time of donation, organs are tested for infectious disease, including HIV. Only healthy organs are actually transplanted.

WILL I RECEIVE LESS AGGRESSIVE MEDICAL TREATMENT BECAUSE I AM TO BE A DONOR?
No. Your caregivers do everything possible to save your life. Only after they determine that further efforts would be futile does a transplant team become involved.

WHAT IF MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY OPPOSE DONATION?
The best way to ensure your wishes are carried out is to tell your family how strongly you feel about being an organ donor. You also should sign and carry a donor card, designate “organ donor” on your driver's license, and record your wishes in legal documents.

DOES ORGAN DONATION LEAVE A BODY DISFIGURED?
Donation does not change the appearance of the body for the funeral service.

HOW MUCH WILL ORGAN DONATION COST MY FAMILY?
Nothing. All costs related to donation are paid by recipients and their health insurance. Your family pays only for the medical care provided before death and funeral expenses.

ARE THERE RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS TO ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION?
Most major religions in the support donation as a gift of life to fellow human beings.

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