

# Donation in the United States



## The Need

- More than 134,000 Americans are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant. Thousands more are in need of cornea donations to restore their vision, and tissue donations to restore their mobility or save their life.
- 81% of individuals on the wait list need a kidney transplant.
- There are not enough organ donors to meet the current need. *Every day*, 30 Americans die while waiting for an organ transplant, simply because the organ they needed did not become available in time.
- The need for organ transplants among communities of color is disproportionately high, frequently due to a high incidence of conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes. African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics/Latinos are three times more likely than Caucasians to suffer from end-stage kidney disease.

## Deceased Donation

- A single organ donor can save up to eight lives. A single cornea and tissue donor can save and enhance the lives of up to **50** people.
- Age or past medical issues do not necessarily impede organ, eye or tissue donation. Even if you cannot donate organs, your donation of corneas may restore sight to the blind (corneas), or save the lives of burn victims (through the donation of skin).
- Donation costs nothing to your family, and the donor is treated with the utmost respect and dignity by recovery professionals. Donation does not impede or require the alteration of funeral arrangements.
- Urban legends and negative Hollywood portrayals deter many Americans from learning the facts about donation.

## Living Kidney Donation

- Donating a kidney does not increase the risk of future health problems, and people with one kidney live as long as those with two.
- Donating a kidney to a relative, friend, colleague in need of transplant allows recipients to wait only months versus years, reducing or eliminating the need for dialysis treatments.
- You do not have to know someone in need in order to altruistically donate. Oregon's Anonymous Living Kidney Donor Program pairs willing potential donors with a stranger on local waiting list.

## How to Help

- To register your decision to be an organ, eye and tissue donor in Oregon, visit [www.DonateLifeNW.org](http://www.DonateLifeNW.org), fill out a paper registration form and mail it to Donate Life Northwest, or say "yes" to donation while at DMV.
- Talk to your family about donation. Whether or not someone registered as a donor, a Donation Specialist will talk to the donor's family about the possibility of organ, eye and/or tissue donation. All too often, families have never discussed donation, and are not sure of what their loved one's wishes would have been.
- Learn more about deceased and living donation options by contacting Donate Life Northwest.

**Donate Life Northwest, P.O. Box 532, Portland, OR 97207**  
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