



Age, Health, and Anatomical Donation Eligibility Fact Sheet

Don't Rule Yourself Out Because of Age

All people regardless of age should consider themselves potential organ and tissue donors. There are no strict upper or lower age limits and no one is too old or too young. Both newborns and senior citizens have been organ, eye, and tissue donors.

Oregonians and Washingtonians can register beginning at age 13, but parent or guardian authorization is required for those under 18 years old to actually become donors, should circumstances occur.

If Health Problems Arise, Remain on the Donor Registry

People who have been diagnosed with conditions or illnesses sometimes fear or assume that they are no longer eligible to donate. However, it is important to remain on the donor registry.

It is impossible to say with 100% certainty that any condition or illness would preclude an individual from being a donor at an unknown point in the future because:

1. donation criteria may change as medical science advances, and
2. donation suitability is determined at the time of death, not at the time an individual adds oneself to the registry.

Eligibility Is Determined at the Time of Death

An individual's ability to be an organ, eye and/or tissue donor is assessed *at the time of death* by medical professionals.

Organ, Eye, and Tissue Recovery Agencies are tightly regulated by the federal government. They follow very stringent criteria for determining donation eligibility to ensure that there is no risk of transmitting any illness to transplant recipients.

Donor eligibility is investigated at *multiple points*. Medical professionals gather an *extensive* medical and social history from lab tests, clinical evaluations, medical records and an individual's family members. When questions arise, on-staff physicians make a final determination.

If you have questions not addressed in this fact sheet, please call us toll-free at 1.800.452.1369.

Common Donation Eligibility Questions*

| <u>Eligibility</u> | <u>Organ Donation</u> | <u>Cornea/Eye Donation</u> | <u>Tissue Donation</u> |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Hepatitis | Case-by-case | Case-by-case | Case-by-case |
| Multiple Sclerosis | Case-by-case | Case-by-case | Case-by-case |
| Alzheimers, Dementia | Case-by-case | Case-by-case | Case-by-case |
| AIDS or HIV Positive | A donor with HIV can donate to a recipient with HIV | Not eligible | Not eligible |
| Age | Eligibility is dependent on a person's health and circumstances of death, not the individual's age | | |
| Cancer** | | Case-by-case | |

* *Eligible does not mean 'automatic.'* Every potential donor is considered on a case-by-case basis.

** *A cancer diagnosis is not an automatic rule-out for donation. Active cancers do not prevent eye donation and under certain circumstances it may be acceptable for a person with a history of cancer to donate organs and tissues if there has been a cancer-free interval prior to a person's passing.*

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are my chances of actually becoming a donor?

A: *Organ donation is extremely rare. Less than one percent of deaths occur in the medical environment required to allow the possibility of organ donation. Eye and tissue donation is much more common. A single eye and tissue donor can help more than 50 people.*

Q: I'm very old. Aren't my organs too worn out to be of use to anyone?

A: *Age and health do not necessarily equate to each other. For example, a 75-year-old in good health may be a better candidate than someone half his or her age.*

Q: How common is it for older adults to become donors?

A: *35% of donors last year were over the age of 50.*

Q: How many people are helped each year?

A: *In 2013, Oregon and SW Washington donors saved the lives of 318 organ recipients, and restored sight and mobility to 1663 cornea recipients and over 56,000 tissue recipients.*

If you have questions not addressed in this fact sheet, please call us toll-free at 1.800.452.1369.