



# *Did you know?*

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION.

- Approximately 96,852 Americans currently wait for a life-saving organ transplant (7/31/07).
- 18 people on the national waiting list die every day, more than 6,500 every year, because there are not enough donated organs.
- Every 12 minutes a new name is added to the national organ waiting list.
- Only 8,024 families donated their loved one's organs last year (2006).
- About 56 people receive an organ transplant every day in the U.S.
- More than 50 people in need can benefit from one person's decision to be an organ and tissue donor.
- With recent advances in medical technology, many more people than ever before can be donors, even those over 70 years of age. The oldest donor was one week shy of his 93rd birthday!
- People under the age of 49 make up almost 40% of the national organ waiting list. Those over the age of 50 represent 60% of the national organ waiting list.
- Individuals over the age of 18 can indicate their desire to be an organ and tissue donor by signing a donor card and expressing their wishes to family members. Relatives can also donate a deceased family member's organs and tissues, even those family members under the age of 18.
- 28,930 heart, liver, lung, kidney, pancreas and intestine transplants were performed in 2006.
- More than 1,000,000 Americans receive tissue transplants of bone, heart valves, tendons, ligaments, corneas and skin annually.
- 36,000 sight-restoring transplants are performed every year.
- There is no cost to be an organ and tissue donor. Donation is a gift. There are costs associated with the donation process. Most of the expense of transplant is generated by the transplant procedures including hospital costs, surgeons' and doctors' fees, medication and after care.
- Most Americans support donation but few have told family members their decision to donate. Share your wishes to become a donor!

## WHO HAS RECEIVED AND WHO IS IN NEED?

Last year, more than a million people received organ and tissue transplants. The following numbers represent transplants performed in 2006 and those people waiting for transplants as of August 2007. For the most current waiting list numbers, see <http://www.unos.org>.

### **LIVER:**

**6,650 Recipients**  
**17,287 Waiting**

### **KIDNEY:**

**17,090 Recipients**  
**76,527 Waiting**

### **HEART:**

**2,192 Recipients**  
**2,671 Waiting**

### **HEART/LUNG:**

**31 Recipients**  
**121 Waiting**

### **LUNG:**

**1,405 Recipients**  
**2,550 Waiting**

### **INTESTINE:**

**175 Recipients**  
**220 Waiting**

### **PANCREAS:**

**463 Recipients**  
**1,689 Waiting**

### **KIDNEY/PANCREAS:**

**924 Recipients**  
**2,376 Waiting**

### **BONE & TISSUE:**

**1,000,000 Recipients**  
**Annually**

### **CORNEA:**

**36,000 Recipients**



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# Myths and Facts

## ABOUT ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

We all want to be remembered – remembered for who we are, what we've accomplished and the differences we've made. One way to make a difference is to learn the facts about organ and tissue donation. Dispel the myths that prevent those in need from obtaining life-saving and life-enhancing transplants. Share your life. Share your decision.<sup>SM</sup> Become educated about organ and tissue donation. Discuss it with your family. Leave a legacy.

**Myth:** *Wealthy people can buy organs. That is not fair.*

**Fact:** It's a federal crime to buy or sell organs and tissues. Factors such as race, gender, age, income or celebrity status are never considered when determining who receives an organ. The organ allocation and distribution system is based on many factors including blood type, length of time on the waiting list, geographical location, severity of illness and other medical criteria. There is no way to buy a place on the waiting list.

**Myth:** *Doctors may let me die so they can transplant organs to their other patients.*

**Fact:** Doctors who treat patients at the time of death have nothing to do with donation or transplantation of their organs and tissues. Every effort is made to save the patient's life before donation can be considered.

**Myth:** *It costs money to donate*

**Fact:** It costs nothing to donate.

**Myth:** *Donation disfigures the body and delays the funeral.*

**Fact:** Donation does not disfigure the body or change the way a person looks at viewing. Donated organs and tissues are removed surgically, as in a routine operation. Most donations take place within 24-36 hours after death and therefore wouldn't delay funeral arrangements.

**Myth:** *My religion opposes donation.*

**Fact:** All major religions – Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism – fully support donation.

**Myth:** *Business travelers are drugged and their kidneys stolen to be transplanted on the black market.*

**Fact:** Although this myth continues to flourish on the Internet and other media outlets, it has never been substantiated. This has never occurred in the U.S. or any other industrialized country. It has no basis in the reality of organ transplantation. See <http://www.unos.org> for more information.

**Myth:** *Signing a donor card is pointless.*

**Fact:** Signing a donor card, and discussing your decision with your family members, is the best way to ensure that your personal wishes will be carried out.

**Myth:** *Transplants don't really work. They are experimental.*

**Fact:** Americans receive more than 28,000 solid organ transplants and 1,000,000 tissue transplants annually. Transplantation is a standard medical procedure, and survival and success rates are extremely high.

**Myth:** *Donation is painful for the donor's family.*

**Fact:** Studies show that donation most often provides immediate and long-term consolation. Donation can be especially comforting when the death is unexpected and the donor is young.



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