

There is a severe organ shortage in this country. Despite continuing efforts at public education, misconceptions and inaccuracies about donation persist. It's a tragedy if even one person decides against donation because they don't know the truth. Following is a list of the most common myths along with the actual facts:

Myth: If emergency room doctors know you're an organ donor, they won't work as hard to save you.

Fact: If you are sick or injured and admitted to the hospital, the number one priority is to save your life. Organ donation can only be considered after brain death has been declared by a physician. Many states have adopted legislation allowing individuals to legally designate their wish to be a donor should brain death occur, although in many states Organ Procurement Organizations also require consent from the donor's family.

Myth: When you're waiting for a transplant, your financial or celebrity status is as important as your medical status.

Fact: When you are on the transplant waiting list for a donor organ, what really counts is the severity of your illness, time spent waiting, blood type, and other important medical information.

Myth: Having "organ donor" noted on your driver's license or carrying a donor card is all you have to do to become a donor.

Fact: While a signed donor card and a driver's license with an "organ donor" designation are legal documents, organ and tissue donation is usually discussed with family members prior to the donation. To ensure that your family understands your wishes, it is important that you tell your family about your decision to donate LIFE.

Myth: Only hearts, livers, and kidneys can be transplanted.

Fact: Needed organs that can be transplanted include the heart, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, liver and intestines. Tissues that can be donated include the eyes, skin, bone, heart valves and tendons.

"You Have the Power to Donate LIFE. Register as an Organ and Tissue Donor."

Go To www.Every11Minutes.org or Call 1-87-Pass-It-On

Myth: Your history of medical illness means your organs or tissues are unfit for donation.

Fact: At the time of death, the appropriate medical professionals will review your medical and social histories to determine whether or not you can be a donor. With recent advances in transplantation, many more people than ever before can be donors. It's best to tell your family your wishes and sign up to be an organ and tissue donor on your driver's license or an official donor document.

Myth: You are too old to be a donor.

Fact: People of all ages and medical histories should consider themselves potential donors. Your medical condition at the time of death will determine what organs and tissue can be donated.

Myth: If you agree to donate your organs, your family will be charged for the costs.

Fact: There is no cost to the donor's family or estate for organ and tissue donation. Funeral costs remain the responsibility of the family.

Myth: Organ donation disfigures the body and changes the way it looks in a casket.

Fact: Donated organs are removed surgically, in a routine operation similar to gallbladder or appendix removal. Donation does not change the appearance of the body for the funeral service.

Myth: Your religion prohibits organ donation.

Fact: All major organized religions approve of organ and tissue donation and consider it an act of charity.

Myth: There is real danger of being heavily drugged, and then waking to find you have had one kidney (or both) removed for a black market transplant.

Fact: This tale has been widely circulated over the Internet. There is absolutely no evidence of such activity ever occurring in the U.S. While the tale may sound credible, it has no basis in the reality of organ transplantation. Many people who hear the myth probably dismiss it, but it is possible that some believe it and decide against organ donation out of needless fear.

Source: United Network for Organ Sharing (www.unos.org)

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