

Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation Facts and Statistics



Lives Saved and Healed

- Nearly 31,000 people in the U.S. began new lives in 2015 thanks to organ transplants (about 85 every day).
- More than 1 million tissue transplants are performed each year.
- More than 40,000 patients have their sight restored every year through corneal transplants.

The Organ Transplant Waiting List

- 120,000 people are on the national organ transplant waiting list; 22,000 (18%) are in California.
- On average, 150 people are added to the national waiting list each day – one every 10 minutes.
- Unfortunately, 22 people die each day simply because the life-saving organ they needed did not become available in time.

The Need in Minority Communities

- Nationwide, minorities represent 57% of all organ transplant candidates, and 63% awaiting kidney transplants are minorities. This high proportion is due to a higher incidence of high blood pressure and/or diabetes, both of which can lead to kidney failure.
- Nationwide, African Americans comprise 12% of the total population, but represent 34% of kidney transplant candidates.
- In California, Hispanics/Latinos make up 41% of those waiting for life-saving transplants, Asians/Pacific Islanders 21%, and African Americans another 12%.

Donation in California

- Consent (first-person or by the family) is given in approximately 80% of cases where patients are pronounced brain dead and are medically suitable to be organ donors.
- To register to be an organ, eye and tissue donor, check “YES!” every time at the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or sign up at donateLIFecalifornia.org or doneVIDAcalifornia.org.
- A living donor can save a life by donating a kidney or a portion of their liver, lung, pancreas or intestine. For more information on living kidney donation, go to LivingDonationCalifornia.org.

Donation Fast Facts

- One organ donor can save up to eight lives, one tissue donor can improve or enhance the lives of 75 others, and one cornea donor can give the gift of sight to two people.
- Patients are matched with a donor depending on the severity of their illness, body size, tissue

type, blood type and other important medical information. Race, gender, age, income and celebrity status are not considered when determining who receives an organ.

- There is no cost to the donor or his/her family for donation.
- There are no limitations on those who can sign up to be donors. More than one-third of all deceased donors are 50 or older. People of all ages and medical histories should consider themselves potential donors (even when past disease or certain chronic conditions may be present).
- Every major religion in the United States supports organ, eye and tissue donation as one of the highest expressions of compassion and generosity.

Biology

- Organs that may be donated (in order of frequency transplanted) include the kidneys, liver, heart, lungs, pancreas and small intestine.
- Tissues that may be donated include corneas/eyes, heart valves, skin, bone, tendons, cartilage and veins.
- In almost all instances, only patients who experience brain death – a medically, legally and morally accepted determination of death resulting from the complete lack of blood flow to the brain – may donate vital organs. This represents about one-half of one percent (.50%) of all deaths in hospitals annually.