

HEALTH IN OUR HANDS!

The Arkansas State University Wellness Program Newsletter
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Organ Donation

Donate Life America

Donate Life America is a non-profit establishment partnering with national organizations and state branches across the United States. They are on a mission to encourage individuals, organizations, and communities to increase the number of organ, tissue, and eye donors which will increase saved lives.

Donate Life America instituted April as National Donate Life Month (NDLM) in 2003. NDLM is celebrated each April as a reminder of the importance of organ donations. More than 120,000 people are waiting on the National organ donation list and more are being added. During the month of April many hospitals, homes, and business participate by flying the Donate Life flag to help bring awareness for the desperate need of donors.

People can visit Donate Life America's website and read inspirational stories from people who have received organ transplants. Also a person can go to this webpage and sign-up as an organ, tissue, and eye donor.

Organ Donors

There are two types of donors, deceased and living. More often donors are deceased and are typically recognized as brain dead. Brain dead is defined as total and irreversible non-functioning of the brain. It is caused by insufficient blood flow to the brain. Deceased donors have the potential to save as many as 8 lives. These donors can provide the following organs: kidneys, pancreas, liver, lungs, heart, and intestines. They can also donate bone, skin, heart valves, and corneas.

Living donors are just as important as deceased. They can provide the following organs: kidney, portion of a liver, lung, or intestine, and in some cases eyes and tissues. The first successful transplant in the United States used a living donor. In 1954 one twin donated his kidney to his twin brother.

Potential living donors are evaluated to determine what their psychological, physical, and emotional response will be to donating an organ. Living donors have to consider the risk factors involved with surgery.

Statistics

The following is a list of statistics involving organ donors and transplants:

- 121,739 individuals are waiting on the organ donor list.
- 18 people die each day waiting for organ transplants.
- On average 79 people a day receives an organ transplant.
- In 2012, 62% of living donors were women and 60% of men were deceased donors.

The Process of Organ Donation

- First step is to enroll as a Donor. A person can enroll through his or her state's donor registry. Most of the time this happens when the person renews his or her driving license. The person can also enroll on-line. Many people tell their families that they want to be organ donors

so families will support their decision when the time arises.

- When the time arises, usually the donor will be admitted to a hospital for an illness or accident. The doctors and nursing staff will do everything possible to save the patient's life.
- When the medical staff has tried everything they can to save the patient's life and the patient is still not responding, the doctor will test to see if the patient is brain dead. If the person is brain dead then he or she has no brain activity and cannot breathe on their own. It is important to know that brain death is not the same as a coma.
- Then the hospital will notify the organ procurement organization (OPO) for every patient that has died or near death. If the patient is a possible applicant for donation, an OPO will immediately travel to the hospital. The OPO will check the state donor registry to see if the person is a registered donor. If the patient is on the list then that represents as legal consent. If the person is not registered then the OPO will ask for consent from the next of kin.
- During this process the donor is preserved by artificial support and every organ is carefully monitored by the medical staff.

- The OPO will schedule the arrival and departure time of the transplant surgical team. The team will go to the operating room to retrieve the organs and then they will take the organs to the hospital where the transplant recipient is having surgery.
- The donor incisions are surgically closed and the donor will be given back to the family for funeral arrangements.

Who Can Donate

Organ donors come in all shapes and sizes. Newborns to senior citizens are eligible. The condition of the organ is more important than the age of the donor. For instance a 40 years old woman with a history of smoking 2 packs a day is less desirable than a 60 years old man who has never smoked a day in his life. If a person has a medical condition he or she may still be able to donate organs. The doctor will examine the state of his or her organs when the time comes.

There are only a few exclusions from organ donation. The donor cannot be HIV positive. His or her organs would be rejected if the donor had active cancer, and systemic infection would also lead to exclusion of organ donation.

Facts about Organ Donation

The following is a list of facts about organ donation:

- Anyone can sign-up for organ donation. When it

is time, the transplant team will determine if organs are suitable for donation.

- Every state provides registrations for organ donation.
- Selling organs is a Federal crime and violation of this law will lead to prison time and monetary fines.
- Regardless of a registered organ donor or not, the hospital will do everything in their ability to save a person's life when he or she comes into the hospital for illness or injury.

References

- <http://donatelifenet.org/understanding-donation/living-donation/>
- <http://organdonor.gov/index.html>

Other News:

**If you have any suggestions for newsletter topics, please contact Dean Susan Hanrahan at hanrahan@astate.edu.

The Arkansas State University Employee Wellness Newsletter is published monthly during the academic year by the College of Nursing and Health Professions. Health questions can be addressed to Dean Susan Hanrahan, Ph.D., ext. 3112 or hanrahan@astate.edu. Produced by Kayla James, graduate student in the College of Nursing and Health Professions, Physical Therapy Program.