

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Organ Donation Saves Lives

Organ donation is a life-saving gift. By donating your organs after you die, you can save or improve as many as 50 lives. Many families say that knowing their loved one helped save the lives of others helps them to cope with their loss.

Today, in the United States, there are more than 95,000 patients waiting for a life-saving organ transplant. The waiting list increases by nearly 4,000 new patients each month. In addition, everyday 17 people die while waiting for a vital organ transplant, such as a heart, liver, kidney, pancreas, lung, or bone marrow.

The need for a new organ can occur very early in life. Nearly 10 percent of the patients waiting for heart transplants are under the age of 18.

You may indicate your interest in organ donation by signing a Uniform Donor Card or, in Wisconsin, complete the designated spot on your driver's license. However, signing a donor's card or driver's license does not guarantee your organ donation wishes. The best way to ensure your organ donation occurs is to inform your family. At the time of death, hospitals seek the consent of the next of kin before removing organs. If you made your family aware of your wishes to be a donor, it makes it easier for them to give their consent.

The National Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network matches donated organs to waiting recipients using their national computer registry. There are 59 organ procurement organizations across the country, which provide organ procurement services to 272 transplant centers. The donor program pays for all costs related to the donation of organs and tissues.



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