

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Today a severe shortage of organs for transplantation exists in our country. Despite continuing efforts at public education, misconceptions and inaccuracies about donation persist. It is a tragedy if even one person decides against donation because they do not know the truth. Following is a list of the most common questions about donation and transplantation.

Q. If emergency room doctors' know you're an organ donor, will they work as hard to save you?

A. If you are sick or injured and admitted to the hospital, the number one priority is to save your life. Organ and tissue recovery takes place only after all efforts to save your life have been exhausted and death has been legally declared. The medical team treating you is completely separate from the organ recovery team.

Q. Does certain history of medical illness mean your organs or tissues are unfit for donation?

A. At the time of death, the appropriate medical professionals will review your medical and social history to determine whether you will be a candidate for donation. Each potential donor is evaluated on a case by case basis. With recent advances in transplantation, more people have the opportunity to become donors. LifeShare suggests that you do not rule yourself out as a potential donor due to illness, let the medical professionals determine if you are a suitable candidate.

Q. When do you become too old to be a donor?

A. People of all ages and medical histories will be considered as potential donors. Your medical condition at the time of death will determine which organs and tissue can be donated, not your age. LifeShare suggests that you do not rule yourself out as a potential donor due to age, let the medical professionals determine if you are a suitable candidate.

Q. Does my family have to pay for organ and tissue donation?

A. No. The donor family is never billed for expenses related to donation. LifeShare Transplant Donor Services of Oklahoma pays for all procedures, tests or evaluations needed following legal death for the donation process. Funeral costs remain the responsibility of the family.

Q. Does organ and tissue donation disfigure the body or change the way it looks in the casket?

A. LifeShare works closely with all state funeral homes to implement the best practices and techniques in donation with the hope of returning your loved one to you with minimal if any change to their appearance.

Q. Do celebrities and people with money get transplanted more quickly than those without?

A. No. Matching organs to recipients is based strictly on medical criteria and has nothing to do with notoriety or wealth. The process for matching a recipient with a donor is dependent upon how sick an individual is and who is the best match for the organ.

Q. Do some religions prohibit donation?

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

Q. Can your family override your wish to be a donor?

A. Because of our state's First Person Consent law, it is not necessary to get permission from the family if a person has expressed his or her desire to be a donor in a "document of gift", such as a driver's license, state ID card or enrollment in Oklahoma's online donor registry, the LifeShare Donor Registry. We strongly believe that a person's wish to donate must be honored, if medically possible.

Organ and tissue recovery coordinators will always talk to the family about the donation before it takes place. Oklahomans are urged to share their decision to be a donor with their families.

If you are under 18, you may declare your intent to be a donor in any document of gift, however, permission from a parent or guardian must be obtained before donation can actually take place.