

HealthBreak

APRIL 2012

National Donate Life Month



YOU COULD SAVE A LIFE

If you knew you had the potential to save a life, would you do it? By simply agreeing to be an organ and tissue donor, you may have the opportunity to do just that. April is National Donate Life Month, so it's a great time to learn the facts about organ, eye and tissue donation and learn how you can help.

Organ transplantation is one of the greatest accomplishments in medical history. Every day, about 77 people get an organ transplant that gives them a second chance at life. Unfortunately, an average of 18 people die each day because an appropriate match was not available or they did not receive a transplant in time. The need for organs and tissue is simply greater than what is available. Currently more than 110,000 men, women and children are awaiting organ transplants to save their lives. Thousands more need tissue and cornea transplants to restore their mobility and sight.

THE FACTS

Unfortunately there is a lot of misunderstanding about organ and tissue donation. Here are some important facts:

- Anyone, regardless of age, race or medical history can be a potential donor.
- All major religions in the United States support organ, eye and tissue donation.

- If you are a donor and are sick or injured, the number one priority is to save your life.
- An open casket funeral is possible for organ, eye and tissue donors. Through the entire process the body is treated with care and respect.
- There is no cost to the donor or his or her family for organ or tissue donation.
- If you are on the waiting list for a transplant, what matters most is the severity of your illness, how long you've been waiting, your blood type, and other important medical information, NOT your financial or celebrity status.

Organ donation can occur with both deceased and living donors. A deceased donor can give the kidneys, pancreas, liver, lungs, heart and intestinal organs. A living donor can give a kidney or a portion of the lung, liver, pancreas or intestine.

BE A DONOR

Each organ and tissue donor could save or improve the lives of as many as 50 people. To become an organ you must register with your state donor registry and have your decision either listed on your driver license or sign and carry a donor card. The laws that oversee donation differ from state to state. **Visit www.donatelife.net** for information specific to your state and to learn more about donation.