



South Carolina Student Handbook

Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation

You have the power to *Donate Life* when yours is over. Sign up to be a donor at www.DonateLifeSC.org or when you get your drivers license at the SCDMV.

Say **YES** to donation.



Working
Together to
Save Lives





Working
Together to
Save Lives



Common Myths of Donation

There is a severe organ shortage in this country. Despite continuing efforts at public education, misconceptions and inaccuracies about donation persist. It's a tragedy if even one person decides against donation because they don't know the truth. Following is a list of the most common myths along with the actual facts:

Myth: If emergency room doctors know you're an organ donor, they won't work as hard to save you.

Fact: If you are sick or injured and admitted to the hospital, the number one priority is to save your life. Organ donation can only be considered after brain death has been declared by a physician. Many states have adopted legislation allowing individuals to legally designate their wish to be a donor should brain death occur, although in many states Organ Procurement Organizations also require consent from the donor's family.

Myth: When you're waiting for a transplant, your financial or celebrity status is as important as your medical status.

Fact: When you are on the transplant waiting list for a donor organ, what really counts is the severity of your illness, time spent waiting, blood type, and other important medical information.

Myth: Having "organ donor" noted on your driver's license or carrying a donor card is all you have to do to become a donor.

Fact: While a signed donor card and a driver's license with an "organ donor" designation are legal documents, organ and tissue donation is usually discussed with family members prior to the donation. To ensure that your family understands your wishes, it is important that you tell your family about your decision to donate LIFE.

Myth: Only hearts, livers, and kidneys can be transplanted.

Fact: Needed organs that can be transplanted include the heart, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, liver and intestines. Tissues that can be donated include the eyes, skin, bone, heart valves and tendons.



Working
Together to
Save Lives



Myth: Your history of medical illness means your organs or tissues are unfit for donation.

Fact: At the time of death, the appropriate medical professionals will review your medical and social histories to determine whether or not you can be a donor. With recent advances in transplantation, many more people than ever before can be donors. It's best to tell your family your wishes and sign up to be an organ and tissue donor on your driver's license or an official donor document.

Myth: You are too old to be a donor.

Fact: People of all ages and medical histories should consider themselves potential donors. Your medical condition at the time of death will determine what organs and tissue can be donated.

Myth: If you agree to donate your organs, your family will be charged for the costs.

Fact: There is no cost to the donor's family or estate for organ and tissue donation. Funeral costs remain the responsibility of the family.

Myth: Organ donation disfigures the body and changes the way it looks in a casket.

Fact: Donated organs are removed surgically, in a routine operation similar to gallbladder or appendix removal. Donation does not change the appearance of the body for the funeral service.

Myth: Your religion prohibits organ donation.

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

Myth: There is real danger of being heavily drugged, and then waking to find you have had one kidney (or both) removed for a black market transplant.

Fact: This tale has been widely circulated over the Internet. There is absolutely no evidence of such activity ever occurring in the U.S. While the tale may sound credible, it has no basis in the reality of organ transplantation. Many people who hear the myth probably dismiss it, but it is possible that some believe it and decide against organ donation out of needless fear.

Source: *United Network for Organ Sharing (www.unos.org)*



Working
Together to
Save Lives



Common Questions/Answers

SOUTH CAROLINA DONOR REGISTRY / THE DONOR CARD

Q: How can I document my decision to be a donor?

A: **To be a donor, you should:**

1. **Mark “organ donor” on your driver’s license application or sign up online @ www.DonateLifeSC.org. If internet access is not available, a hard copy registry form can be provided by DLSC (1-87-PASS-IT-ON).**
2. **Tell your family you would like to be a donor.**
3. **Sign and carry a donor card (signing up in the registry is preferred)**

Q: Can I change my mind?

A: **Yes. If you do, just remove your name from the donor registry and discuss this decision with your family members.**

Q: Is the donor card a legal document?

A: **Yes, it is legal in all 50 states. However signing up on the registry is a more effective method of indicating one’s donation wishes.**

Q: I would like to donate my body for anatomical study after I am dead. What do I do?

A: **Contact MUSC – Anatomical Gift Program - 843-792-3521**

AGE/ DISEASES

Q: Who can donate?

A: **Anyone over the age of 18 can indicate their desire to be a donor by registering at a SCDMV office or online @ www.DonateLifeSC.org. Relatives can also opt to donate a deceased family member’s organs and tissues, including those family members under the age of 18.**

Q: I’m 70 years old. Am I too old to be a donor?

A: **No matter what your age, you should register to be a donor and tell your family your wishes. The appropriate medical specialist will make a decision when the time comes. You are never too old to help someone through donation.**

Q: I have AIDS. Can I be a donor?

A: **Probably not, but each patient is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Previous illness is not necessarily a contraindication (rule-out) for donation. Individuals are encouraged to discuss donation as an option regardless of previous illness.**

Q: I’ve had cancer. Can I be a donor?

A: **An evaluation will be done at the time of death. It is likely that you will be a candidate for some type of donation. (Note: It varies on the cancer and how long the patient has been cancer-free.) Regardless, you should register to become a donor and share your decision with your family.**



Working
Together to
Save Lives



Q: I am a smoker. Can I be a donor?

A: **You may not be a candidate for heart/lung donation. If you are in good health otherwise, you would probably be considered as a donor for other organs. Register to become a donor and share your decision with your family.**

Q: I have diabetes and/or high blood pressure. Can I be a donor?

A: **Yes, it may be possible. But the appropriate medical specialist will decide at the time of death. It will depend on whether you had developed any related complications and how severe your condition was. Register to become a donor and share your decision with your family.**

FAMILY PERMISSION

Q: Why do I need to tell my family I want to be a donor?

A: **At the time of your death, your family will be asked if you ever expressed a wish to be an organ or tissue donor. It would be very reassuring to your family to know that they are able to carry out an important last desire of yours that would help others, even after your death.**

Q: Can my family (or spouse) refuse permission for organ donation even though I have registered to become a donor?

A: **No. South Carolina's legislation honors "first-person" consent. Consent from the next-of-kin isn't required if you're on the registry or a living will, durable power of attorney, or other document of gift (such as a donor card) evidencing a gift of organs or tissue has been executed by the donor.**

COST OF DONATION AND THE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Q: If I become an organ or tissue donor, who is responsible for my funeral costs and arrangements?

A: **Funeral plans will be made in the usual fashion. Organ donation may affect the timing of funeral arrangements. Costs for the donation of organs and tissues are paid for by the organ procurement organization. All funeral costs remain the responsibility of the donor's family.**

Q: Can I have an open casket funeral if I am a donor?

A: **Yes. The body of someone who has donated their organs or tissues (including cornea donation) is treated with respect, and is prepared for the funeral in the customary manner.**

Q: Will my family be charged for the costs of organ or tissue recovery?

A: **No. All costs associated with organ or tissue recovery will be handled by the organ procurement organization.**



Working
Together to
Save Lives



ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION

Q: I've heard that emergency personnel are less likely to try to save your life if they know you are a potential donor. Is this true?

A: **No. If you are sick or injured, the number one priority is to save your life. Organ and tissue donation can only be considered after you are deceased and after your family has been consulted.**

Q: How do medical personnel determine who receives a transplant?

A: **Separate and specific criteria for the equitable allocation of each organ (heart, pancreas, lung, kidney, liver, and heart/lung) have been determined by experts and approved by the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN).**

Q: What are the most commonly donated organs?

A: **liver, heart, lungs, kidneys, pancreas, and intestine**

Q: What are the most commonly donated tissues?

A: **corneas, bone, bone marrow, cartilage, tendons, skin, fascia, and pericardium**

Q: What is tissue donation?

A: **Tissue donation involves replacing tissues such as skin, bones, corneas, blood, and bone marrow. Blood transfusions were the first tissue transplants performed on humans. In the 1940s, surgeons developed procedures to replace human corneas, and, for the past several decades, transplantation technology has expanded in all areas.**

Q: Can you donate an organ while you are still alive?

A: **Yes, certain kinds of transplants can be achieved using living donors. For example, over 40 percent of all kidney transplants are performed with living donors. The donor is often related to the person needing the transplant, and can live a normal life with just one healthy kidney. Also, there are new methods of transplanting partial organs from a living donor. However, these types of partial transplants are rare. (Living Liver transplants = approx. 4%; Living Lung transplants = less than 1%)**



Working
Together to
Save Lives



South Carolina Donor Registry Q & A

I have the heart and “Y” on my driver’s license/ID; doesn’t that mean I am already registered?

No. The old symbol indicates a person’s desire to be a donor. That information was not transferred to the registry. Now, by registering at the SCDMV, a new donor logo will be placed on your driver’s license/ID to symbolize your legal consent to be a donor. The new logo representing legal consent will be a heart surrounded by a circle with 11 ticks in it.

How do I become a registered organ and tissue donor?

There are two ways to register your legal consent to be a donor:

- 1.) At any SCDMV office or on the SCDMV web site **www.SCDMVonline.com** when obtaining, renewing or changing your driver’s license/ID information.
- 2.) On the registry web site **www.DonateLifeSC.org**. This is the official and secure Donate Life South Carolina. (DLSC) Web site (You may fill out an organ/tissue donor card but that does not place you in the registry.)

Who can sign up on the registry?

Individuals who are at least 18 years of age can register their legal consent to donate specific or all organs and tissues upon their death. (Minors between the ages of 13 and 17 can register to be an organ/tissue donor. However, their parents or legal guardian will make the final decision about donation at the appropriate time.)

How do I make changes to my registration?

Visit **www.DonateLifeSC.org** and select “*Update My Registry Info*” to change anything about your registration. You may also have your name added/removed by visiting any SCDMV office or **www.SCDMVonline.com** when completing a credential transaction. SCDMV will assess an administrative fee for the change and there may be a 72 hour delay in removing your name from the SC Organ and Tissue Donor Registry.

Why do we need a registry?

The registry enables an individual to designate their legally binding consent to be a donor following their death. Registered donors should let their families know they plan to donate organs and/or tissue. At the time of a registered donor’s death, the registry will provide clear confirmation of the donor’s final wishes. *This takes added burden off the donor’s next of kin.*

If I decide to register online, do I also need to go to SCDMV to have my driver’s license/ID changed?

No. If you register online, you will be in the registry. Your driver’s license/ID will not have the new indication until your next regular visit to the SCDMV (to obtain, renew or change your driver’s license/ID) and you check “yes” to donation. If you visit the SCDMV any other time requesting that your driver’s license/ID reflect your new online choice, there will be an administrative fee for processing the change.

Do I need to check “Yes” to donation each time I visit the SCDMV to obtain, change or renew my driver’s license/ID?

Yes. This will keep your registry data current.

Who will have access to my information on the registry?

Donate Life South Carolina (DLSC) houses and maintains both the secure online registry data and data obtained securely from the SCDMV. Only key DLSC personnel and professionals involved with the recovery of organ and tissue donations will have access to the registry. Registrant information will never be shared with entities not associated with the donation process.