

# You know. We know. Do they know?

Tell your loved ones you've joined the  
Organ Donor Register



## Frequently Asked Questions

Deciding whether or not to become a donor after you die is a very personal matter and it's important for everyone to make their own decision.

To help you decide, here are answers to the most commonly asked questions about organ and tissue donation:

### 1. What is organ donation?

Organ donation is the gift of an organ to help someone who needs a transplant. The generosity of donors and their families enables over 3,000 people in the UK every year to benefit from donated organs.

### 2. Which organs can be transplanted?

The kidneys, heart, liver, lungs, pancreas and the small bowel can all be transplanted.

Techniques are improving all the time and we may soon be able to transplant other parts of the body to help even more people.

### 3. Which tissues can be donated?

As well as major organs, other parts of the body such as the cornea (the front part of the eye), skin, bone, tendons, cartilage and heart valves can all be donated.

### 4. Can you donate an organ while you are still alive?

Yes, in some cases. The organ most commonly donated by a living person is a kidney. Part of a liver can be transplanted and it may also be

possible to donate a segment of a lung. In a very small number of cases, part of the small bowel can be transplanted.

### 5. What is the NHS Organ Donor Register?

The NHS Organ Donor Register is a confidential, computerised database. You need to join the Register if you wish to donate your organs after death. The Register currently has more than 18 million members and is used by healthcare professionals to establish whether a person wanted to donate and, if so, which organs and tissues.

### 6. Why is joining the Organ Donor Register so important?

Joining the Register means your intentions are securely recorded and will enable healthcare professionals to carry out your donation wishes in the event of your death.

### 7. Do I need to discuss my wishes with my close family and friends?

Yes, you need to tell them that you have joined the Register and that in the event of your death you wish to donate your organs. In the UK, organs and tissue from a potential

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donor will only be used if that is their wish. If your wishes are not clear, the person closest to you in life will be asked what they think you would have wanted, so it's important that you make sure they're aware of your views on organ donation.

## 8. Do I need to carry a donor card if I join the Register?

No, it's not necessary. However, many people like to keep one as a personal reminder of their donation wishes, to help start a conversation with family and friends about joining the Register or to encourage others to think about organ donation.

## 9. Who can join the NHS Organ Donor Register?

Everyone, irrespective of age or health, who is considered legally competent. Your entry in the Register provides legal consent for the donation of your organs. Children can register but their parents, guardians or those with parental responsibility will be asked to provide their consent should the child's death lead to donation being considered.

## 10. Why are even more donors needed?

The number of people needing a transplant is expected to rise steeply due to an ageing population, an increase in kidney failure and scientific advances which have improved patient care.

The number of organs available for transplant, though, has remained static over the past few years. Only a very small number of people die in circumstances where they are able to donate their organs. Because organs have to be transplanted very soon after someone has died, they can only be donated by someone who has died in hospital.

Another major reason for the shortage of organs is that many people have not recorded their wishes about donation or discussed it with their families, so when you join the Register make sure you let those closest to you know.

## 11. What if I change my mind?

If you want to change your donation preferences, remove yourself from the Register or simply check your details as they appear on the Register, please ring 0300 123 23 23 or visit [organdonation.nhs.uk](http://organdonation.nhs.uk).

To register as an organ donor visit [transplantweek.co.uk](http://transplantweek.co.uk) or call our donor line on 0300 123 23 23