

Organ Donation

What organs and tissues can I donate?

Kidney - People on dialysis suffering from kidney disease may benefit from a transplant. A recipient of a kidney transplant will be given that chance to lead a more normal life.

Liver - Many children and adults suffering from severe liver disease will die without transplants. Donation gives them a second chance.

Lung, Heart or Heart/Lung - Many types of fatal heart and lung diseases can be treated successfully through transplantation.

Pancreas - Through pancreatic transplantation, diabetics can look forward to tomorrow without daily insulin shots and the possible loss of limbs, sight, or life.

Eyes - The cornea, similar to a contact lens, is the transplant tissue that covers the iris, the colored part of the eye. The cornea may be transplanted to restore sight to the blind.

Skin - A thin layer of skin, approximately 1/100th inch thick, may be donated and used as a temporary covering for burn wounds.

Bone - Bone is the most frequently used tissue. Bone plays an important role in curing birth and other defects and for back and dental surgery.

How do I get organs for transplantation?

Organs are donated by individuals at the time of their death. The circumstances of the death and the health history of the donor determine which organs can be used.

Who bears the cost for such donations?

Since organ and tissue donation are gifts there is no cost to the family of the donor. By law, no payment can be made to them. All of the expenses and costs for donor medical tests and organ recovery are incurred by the organ bank. However, funeral expenses must still be paid by the donor's family.

If I donate my organs and tissue, will this preclude me having an open casket funeral?

Absolutely not. Organ and tissue donation does not prevent persons from viewing the body or having a normal funeral service. Skilled medical personnel treat the body with the utmost respect and care.

Who will receive my organs and tissue?

Donees or recipients are determined by need, as well as by tissue and blood match.

Will there ever exist a conflict between saving my life and donating organs?

Absolutely not. There are strict legal guidelines that must be followed before death can be certified and organs removed. These particular laws preclude a physician who has declared a person dead from being involved in the removal of that person's organs or the

transplantation surgery itself.

How can I declare that I wish to donate my organs and tissue?

Although there is no clear-cut manner in which to accomplish this goal, there are several things you can do. One is to sign a "Uniform Donor Card," which you can obtain from a local or national organ bank. The other method is to sign a "Statement Regarding Anatomical Gifts," a sample of which is included below. Both statements should be discussed with your family or authorized representative so they are fully aware of your wishes. It is probably a good idea to discuss such donations with your physician as well.

What if I declare my intent to donate my organs and then change my mind?

That is perfectly fine and is your legal right. If you do change your mind after making such declaration, simply tear up the donor card or legal statement and relate such actions to your family and physician. You can always redeclare your intent to donate organs if you change your mind again later.

SAMPLE

STATEMENT REGARDING ANATOMICAL GIFTS

I, Mary Jones, of Dallas County, Texas, make the following statement regarding anatomical gifts.

ANATOMICAL GIFT

I give such parts of my body to such individuals, institutions, or physicians, qualified to receive anatomical gifts under Section 4 of the Texas Anatomical Gift Act, as may be requested by such individuals, institutions, or physicians. I request that my personal representative or an authorized person make anatomical gifts in a manner consistent with my desires expressed in this statement, and I request that my next of kin respect my wishes.

PRIORITY OF DONATIONS

An anatomical gift that will be used in connection with the treatment of an imminently life threatening disorder shall take precedence over a gift of that part to any other donee. My personal representative or an authorized person shall make final determination of who is to receive any part if a conflict should arise.

ATTENDING PHYSICIAN

If my attending physician accepts an anatomical gift on behalf of a donee, that physician shall not participate in the procedure for removing or transplanting such part.

INSTRUCTIONS

If I have given any written instructions regarding the burial, cremation, or other disposition of my body, I direct that any donee take possession of my body subject to such instructions, if that donee has actual knowledge of such instructions. If there is any conflict between the statements made in this document and such instructions, my wishes regarding anatomical gifts shall take preference over my instructions regarding the

disposition of my body.

COUNTERPARTS

I may be signing more than one statement regarding anatomical gifts. I intend that only signed documents be effective and that no effect shall be given to a photocopy or other reproduction of a signed document.

DEFINITIONS

The term "part," "physician," and "attending physician" have the same meaning as is given to these terms in the Texas Anatomical Gifts Act. The term "authorized person" means a person authorized to make donations under Section 3(b) of the Texas Anatomical Gifts Act in the order of priority provided in that Act.

EXPENSES

I make this gift on the condition that the gift be made at no expense to my estate or my family. All expenses or costs associated with the gift shall be borne by the donee or recipient or an individual or entity on the donee's or recipient's behalf.

Signed in the presence of the witnesses who have signed below this _____ day of _____, 200_____.

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF DALLAS

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared Mary Jones, and, known to me to be the declarant and witnesses whose names are subscribed to the foregoing instrument in their respective capacities, and, all of said persons being by me duly sworn, Mary Jones declared to me and to the said witnesses in my presence that said instrument is her Statement Regarding Anatomical Gifts, and that she had willingly and voluntarily made and executed it as her free act and deed for the purposes therein expressed.

Witness

Witness

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME by the declarant and by the witnesses this _____ day of _____, 200_____.

Notary Public, State of Texas