

## Deciding to donate

For many people, organ donation is an opportunity to give new hope to others. When we die, our organs may be the difference between life and death for sick or injured people.

# Deciding to donate

The organ donation decision can be difficult for many people. Because donation happens after we die, the decision-making process requires that we confront our own mortality. Alongside this, many people also have questions relating to religious, family or medical concerns.

They often ask: Who will receive my organs? How does donation actually happen? How will I look afterwards? How will my family be affected? You can find answers to these and other common questions in our Facts and statistics fact sheet or at [www.donatelife.gov.au](http://www.donatelife.gov.au).

### Why should I become a donor?

The overwhelming reason most people give for deciding to become donors is to help save or improve the lives of others.

Australia has a world class reputation for successful transplant outcomes, but a shortage of donors means that around 1700 people are waiting at any one time for a life-saving or life-improving transplant. The demand for transplant organs and tissues is growing.

One organ and tissue donor can save the lives of up to 10 people and improve the lives of dozens more.

### Why should I discuss my decision?

It might seem that your organ donation decision only concerns yourself. While becoming a donor is a very personal decision, your family is also affected because, when the time comes, they will be asked to give their consent for you to be a donor. If they do not know your wishes, they are less likely to say yes.

This means that if you want to be a donor, your family needs to know. Discuss your donation decision with your family.

### Why do I need to register?

The Australian Organ Donor Register is the official national register for organ and tissue donation. It keeps a record of whether a person wishes to be a donor and of the organs and tissues they agree to donate.

Authorised medical personnel can access the register 24 hours a day from anywhere in Australia. This means that when someone dies in a situation where donation might be possible, medical personnel can immediately know whether the deceased person wished to be a donor.

If you are on the register, your family will be asked to give their consent. However, you do not have to register to be a donor. If you are not registered, your family will still be asked to give consent.

That is why it is important that your family knows your wishes.

### How do I register?

To register to become an organ and tissue donor:

- ⇒ Visit the Australian Organ Donor Register website,
- ⇒ Call 1800 777 203, or
- ⇒ Fill out a form at any Medicare office.

Your local GP may also have registration forms.

