



*One life. One decision. Another gift of hope.*

## **Indiana Donor Choice for Organ/Tissue Donation: Frequently Asked Questions**

Q: *How do I become an organ and tissue donor in Indiana?*

A: To register in Donate Life Indiana.org as an organ and tissue donor, go to **[www.giftofhope.org](http://www.giftofhope.org)** and click on "Understanding Donation." Then click on "Becoming a Donor" and "Donate Life Indiana.org." You will then be on the registry Web site, which is maintained by the Indiana Donation Alliance Foundation.

You can also register by visiting [www.donatelifelifeindiana.org](http://www.donatelifelifeindiana.org) or through the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Regardless of how you register, your choice to donate is legally binding. However, when you register online at [www.donatelifelifeindiana.org](http://www.donatelifelifeindiana.org), additional options are provided, such as the opportunity to donate for research, as well as ways to notify your loved ones via e-mail about your donation decision.

Q: *How do I make sure my donation wishes can be honored?*

A: If you decide you want to be a donor and register your wishes, the Indiana Donor Choice law supports your donation decision. If you are 18 or older and have registered your wishes via Donate Life Indiana.org or through the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles, or have signed a legal document indicating that you want to be a donor, qualified medical personnel have the legal authority to carry out your last wish. (If you are not 18 years old, you can still be a donor, but your parents or guardian will be asked for consent.)

Q: *Does Indiana's Donor Choice law apply to a person who does not enroll in Donate Life Indiana.org but has a signed license or another signed document indicating the decision to donate?*

A: Yes. However, the document must be signed and dated after July 1, 2001. We also must be able to locate the document in the short timeframe available to coordinate a donation after the donor's death. To ensure your decision to donate is carried out, it is best to register in Donate Life Indiana.org. It is also recommended that you inform family members, so they know what to expect.

Q: *What organs and tissues can be donated?*

A: Organs that can be donated are the liver, heart, lungs, kidneys, pancreas and small intestine. Corneas, bone saphenous veins, heart valves and skin are tissues that can be donated.



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**Q:** *When I register, can I designate which organs and tissues I want to donate?*

**A:** If you register in Donate Life Indiana.org, you can designate which organs and tissues you want to donate by indicating one of the following:

1. "Total donor" for "all needed organs and tissues," or
2. "Partial donor," with specified designations for heart, kidneys, liver, lungs, pancreas, arteries/veins, bones and connective tissue, skin, and eyes/corneas.

You can also indicate permission for "any organs and tissues not suitable for transplant to be used in medical research." The organs and tissues that you are medically eligible to donate cannot be determined until the time of your death.

If you register as a donor through the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, you will be able to indicate "total" donor or "partial" donor. However, if you designate "partial," you will need to register in Donate Life Indiana.org to designate which organs and tissues you want to donate.

Whether your donation takes place upon your choice through the registry or through your family's consent, we will confirm with family members the organs and tissues that you are eligible to donate. We also will provide your family with information on the people who have been helped through your donation, unless your family asks not to receive this information.

**Q:** *When I become a donor, how will my family be involved?*

**A:** Coordinators with Gift of Hope will come to the hospital to talk with your doctors and meet with your family. We will review a disclosure form of your donor registration, explain the donation process, answer questions and provide additional support that your family may need. We will ask for current medical information about you, called a medical/social history, which helps us determine which organs and tissues may be transplanted.

During this time, we will also offer to provide your family with follow-up information after the donation, such as general information about the recipients you have helped. Your family can take advantage of our ongoing programs and services for families of donors for as long as they wish. This support we provide for families has not changed. We are here for families during and after donation regardless of whether consent is given by the donor or the donor's family.

**Q:** *Will my family meet my recipients?*

**A:** Most donor families are told the age, sex, occupation and other general characteristics of the recipient. If both the donor family and recipient agree, they may exchange names, correspond, and even meet.

**Q:** *Are there any costs to my family for donation?*

**A:** No. There is no cost to the donor's family or estate.



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Q: *What if someone registers in Donate Life Indiana.org and later changes his or her mind?*

A: Upon registering their donor designation, registrants create a password. Individuals that would like to change the status of their registration may do so by visiting the registry at [www.donatelifeindiana.org](http://www.donatelifeindiana.org) and entering their password. It is also important that they tell family members of their decision or change in their donor designation.

Q: *What happens if my family is opposed to my decision to donate?*

A: Donor choice laws are established to honor your legal end-of-life decision, and to clearly document an individual's decision when family members may be unaware or have differing opinions. We encourage you to inform family members of your decision to donate, so that it is not a surprise to them at the time of your death. Our coordinators are carefully trained to work with families experiencing a wide range of emotions when losing a loved one, and will delicately work through any questions and concerns your family may have. It is never our intent to compound a family's grief or cause additional stress at such a difficult time. In the end, however, we are bound by the law and the decision you have made. The experience of the many other states that honor donor choice shows that, over the years, very few families have opposed donation after learning of their loved one's decision and having their questions and concerns answered.

Q: *If a durable power of attorney or living will states a decision to not donate, will donation be pursued?*

A: No, unless the individual registered his or her choice to donate in Donate Life Indiana.org at a later date.

Q: *Can someone from outside Indiana, such as a college student from another state, sign up in Donate Life Indiana.org?*

A: Only if the individual has an Indiana driver's license or state ID. Most other states—including Illinois and Iowa—also have donor registries, so out-of-state residents are strongly encouraged to register in their states. They can visit [www.donatelifeindiana.org](http://www.donatelifeindiana.org) to access a link to the Donate Life America site, which contains donation registration rules for every state. If an out-of-state resident dies in Indiana, we will check to see whether the patient is registered as a donor in his or her own state. If so, we will honor that donor decision in Indiana.

Q: *Where can I find out more about organ and tissue donation, and how it works?*

A: Visit [www.giftofhope.org](http://www.giftofhope.org) to learn more about how your decision will help others, how Gift of Hope coordinates the organ and tissue donation process, and how we support families during and after a loved one's donation.

Gift of Hope is proud to serve as the federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organization that coordinates organ and tissue donation and services to families of donors in the northern three-quarters of Illinois and northwest Indiana. Our role is to coordinate the donation process, educate medical professionals on all aspects of donation, and provide support for families of donors.