

# Healthy Living

Patient Information from the American Chiropractic Association

## Donate the Gift of Life

Did you know that, as of Feb. 9, 2006, the national waiting list for life-saving organ transplants contained more than 90,800 patients? Sadly, 18 wait-listed patients die each day because a donor organ didn't become available in time. Thousands more need tissues and marrow. Blood that can make possible these and other vital medical procedures also is in critically short supply. You can help.

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA), together with its thousands of members across the country, has signed on as a partner and charter member of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Workplace Partnership for Life*, a nationwide network to increase the number of organ, tissue, marrow and blood donors in the United States. We'd like you to join us in this effort.

Organ and tissue transplantation saves lives. About 74 people receive life-enhancing organ transplants each day and about 82 percent of patients who receive a donated kidney are still alive 5 years later. The following information will help you learn more about how you can become a lifesaver for someone in need.



### What organs can be transplanted?

Donated kidneys, hearts, lungs, livers, pancreases and intestines can be transplanted.

### What tissues can be transplanted?

Blood vessels, bone, bone marrow, connective tissue, corneas, heart valves, middle ears and skin are among the tissues that can be transplanted.

### Must I have medical tests to register as an organ and tissue donor?

No testing is needed before you sign a donor card or indicate your intent to donate on your driver's license. At the time of donation, organs are tested for infectious diseases, including HIV. Only healthy organs are actually transplanted.

### Will I receive less aggressive medical treatment because I am willing to be a donor?

No. Your own physicians do everything possible to save your life. Only after they determine that further efforts would be futile does a transplant team become involved.

	<b>Organ/Tissue Donor Card</b>	
I wish to donate my organs and tissues. I wish to give:		
<input type="checkbox"/> any needed organs and tissues	<input type="checkbox"/> only the following organs and tissues:	
Donor Signature _____ Date _____		
Witness _____		
Witness _____		

### **What if members of my family oppose donation?**

The best way to ensure your wishes are carried out is to tell your family how strongly you feel about being an organ and tissue donor. You should also sign and carry a donor card (see below), indicate your intent to donate on your driver's license, and record your wishes in legal documents.

### **Does organ donation leave a body disfigured?**

Donation does not change the appearance of the body for the funeral service.

### **How much will organ donation cost my family?**

Nothing. All costs related to donation are paid by recipients and their health insurance. Your family pays only for the medical care provided before death and funeral expenses.

### **Who decides who receives donated organs?**

The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network matches donated organs with critically ill patients on the national waiting list. Medical urgency, compatibility of blood chemistries and body size are considerations in making the match.

### **Does the donor family meet the recipient?**

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

### **Are there religious objections to organ and tissue donation?**

Most major religions in the U.S. support donation as a gift of life to fellow human beings.

### **What organs can be donated from a living donor?**

An individual can donate a kidney and a portion of the liver, lung, or intestine while living.

### **Are there age limits for donors?**

There are no age limitations on who can donate. The

### **How Do I Become an Organ Donor?**

- Sign the organ and tissue donor card on reverse, and carry it in your wallet or purse at all times. Have two people witness your signature, preferably family members.
- If you have a driver's license, find out from your local motor vehicle department how you can indicate on it that you want to be an organ and tissue donor.
- Tell your family members that you have decided to become an organ and tissue donor so they will understand your wishes and support them.
- If you are under age 18, you may need to take additional steps to make a valid donation declaration.
- For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Web site at [www.organdonor.gov](http://www.organdonor.gov) or call **1-888-ASK-HRSA**.

deciding factor on whether a person can donate is the person's physical condition, not the person's age. Newborns as well as senior citizens have been organ donors. Persons younger than 18 years of age must have a parent's or guardian's consent. ■

### **ACA** American Chiropractic Association

For more information on prevention and wellness, or to find a doctor of chiropractic near you, go to the Patient Information section on ACA's Web site at [www.acatoday.org](http://www.acatoday.org) or call 800-986-4636.



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