

## Making and Sharing Your Decision About Organ/Tissue Donation

Making a decision about donating your organs or tissues is something to think about and share with your family members **before** you are in a situation where you may not be able to communicate your wishes or desires. The ideas listed below may assist you in sharing with your family and/or loved ones your decision regarding donation. Sharing your decision gives your family the option to support your commitment.

- **Tell** them that you want to donate your organs/tissues and this decision is right for you based on your beliefs and values.
- **Tell** them how your decision, as one person willing to donate, can potentially help more than 50 other people. Donation can improve or even save the lives of those suffering from organ failure, bone defects, burns, or blindness.
- **Tell** them that the next-of-kin will be asked for consent at or near the time of your death.
- **Ask** your family to witness your decision. If you have already signed a donor card or indicated your decision on your driver's license, show it to them. If you have not signed your donor card, do it in the presence of your family and let them sign as your witnesses.

## Sharing Your Life and Your Decision with Others

Organ and tissue transplantation is one of the most remarkable success stories in the history of medicine. Transplantation may be the only hope for thousands of people suffering from organ failure, or in desperate need of corneas, skin, bone or other tissue. More than 60,000 Americans await

life-saving organs while hundreds of thousands more could benefit from tissue transplants. Tragically, the need for donated organs and tissues is greater than the supply. Thousands of people die needlessly each year due to lack of donors. You can save lives by deciding to be an organ and tissue donor.

Sharing your decision to be an organ/tissue donor with your family or significant others is as important as making the decision itself. At or near the time of your death, your family will be asked to make a decision regarding donation. Sharing your decision with your family now, will prevent confusion and uneasy feelings about carrying out your wishes later. Carrying out your wish to donate can save other lives and provide your family with great comfort in their time of grief.

## Questions and Answers

Many people have questions about donation such as who can donate and how to donate. The answers to these common questions are:

### • *Who can become a donor?*

Everyone should consider themselves as potential donors. Your medical condition at the time of death will determine what organs and tissues can be donated and that decision will be made by the donor organizations.

### • *What organs and tissues can I donate?*

Organs that are routinely needed include the heart, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, liver, and intestines. Tissues that can be donated to help others include the eyes, skin, bone, heart valves and tendons.

### • *Will my decision to become an organ and tissue donor affect the quality of my medical care?*

No. Organ and tissue recovery takes place only after all efforts to save your life have been exhausted and death has been legally declared. The

doctors working to save your life are entirely separate from the team involved in recovering your organs and tissues.

### • *Will donation leave my body disfigured so that I can't have an open casket funeral?*

Donation neither disfigures the body nor changes the way it looks in a casket.

### • *Will my family have to pay for any expenses should I decide to donate?*

No. Donation costs nothing to the donor's family or estate.

### • *Does my religion approve of donation?*

Most religions approve of organ and tissue donation and consider it a gift; an act of charity. If you have any questions, however, contact your religious advisor.

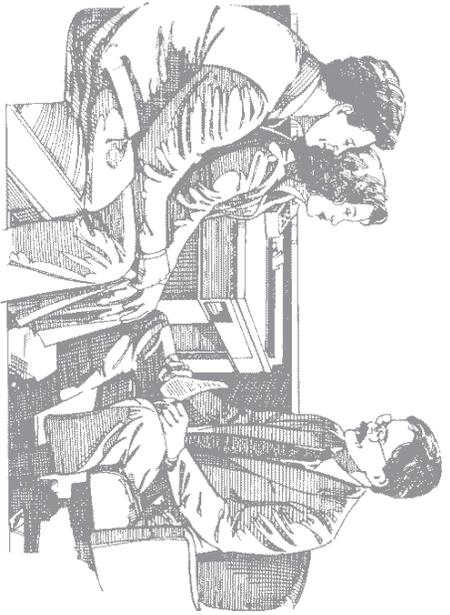
### • *What will happen to my donated organs and tissues after they are removed?*

A national system ensures the fair distribution of organs in the United States. The people who receive your organs and tissues will be identified based upon many factors, such as blood type, length of time on waiting list, severity of illness and other medical criteria. Factors such as race, gender, age, income or celebrity status are not considered when determining who receives an organ. Buying and selling organs is against the law.

### • *How can I get more information on donation?*

You can receive more information on donation by asking your nurse, doctor, or social worker to contact the Organ Procurement Organization for you at 1-800-535-GIVE.





## Sign the Donor Card in Your Family's Presence

By completing the donor card at right in the presence of your family and having them sign as witnesses, you'll know they support your wishes. The donor card serves as a reminder to your family and medical staff. Carry it in your wallet or purse at all times. An extra card is provided to help encourage others to share life.

### For more information, contact:

North Florida Lions Eye Bank  
 Organ Procurement Organization  
 at the University of Florida  
 University of Florida Tissue Bank  
 1-800-535-GIVE



### My Commitment to Share Life Uniform Donor Card

I \_\_\_\_\_, have spoken to my family about organ and tissue donation. The following people have witnessed my commitment to be a donor. I wish to donate the following:  
 any needed organs and tissues     the following organs and tissues:

\_\_\_\_\_

Donor  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Witness \_\_\_\_\_



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Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Witness \_\_\_\_\_

*Nothing  
 is more  
 precious*



*than the gift of life.*