

Talk to Your Teen about Organ Donation

When your teen applies for a driver's license, she will be asked if she wants to be an organ donor. This is just one of many decisions she will face as a new driver. It is often hard to discuss organ donation. Most donated organs come from deceased donors. However, you might be surprised to find that your teen has definite wishes.

Discuss organ donation with your teen. Before you talk, learn the facts. This helps your teen make an informed decision.

Organ donation saves lives and heals bodies. It gives thousands of people a second chance at life. Over 115,000 people in the U.S. await an organ transplant. More people need transplants than people are willing to donate.

Anyone of any age can donate an organ. One donor can give solid organs to eight people. Organs include lungs, heart, kidneys, liver, pancreas and intestines. One person's tissue donation can heal more than 25 people. These donations include tissue, heart valves, bone, veins, skin, ligaments and corneas.

In the event of an accident, an ambulance takes a person to the hospital for treatment. Doctors make every effort to save that person's life. Organ donation is considered only when doctors:

- Find no brain stem activity and
- Declare the brain dead.

Only then, do they call the transplant team to take or "harvest" the organs. They treat the body with utmost respect. The family does not pay the expenses associated with the donation.

People with end stage organ failure must meet pre-transplant requirements. Then they are placed on the United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS) National Transplant Waiting List. When the donor bank finds a donor match, the patient receives a call. A match could happen a few hours after being placed on the list. It could also take years.

When your teen becomes an organ donor, you can also sign your license or go online to sign up.

- Go to <https://www.donatelifellinois.org/>
- Go to <http://www.dmv.org/il-illinois/organ-donor.php>
- Go to <https://www.ilsos.gov/organdonorregister/>
- Call 1-800-210-2106
- Visit your nearest Secretary of State Office.



*Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital
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