



**Established in 1987, LifeGift is a not-for-profit organ procurement organization that recovers organs and tissue for individuals needing transplants in 109 Texas counties in North, Southeast and West Texas.**

**Organs and tissues are precious community resources. LifeGift is an integral part of the health care community helping to manage them. Thousands of residents of the areas we serve – and beyond – have had their lives restored by receiving organ and tissue transplants provided through our unique partnerships.**

### Our Role:

- Help grieving families consider the decision to give the gift of life. Inform families of registered donors of their loved ones' consent to donate.
- Coordinate the organ and tissue recovery process with surgeons, other transplant professionals and transplant centers. Collect data for use in transplantation research.
- Partner with hospitals to continually develop effective, government-regulated donation systems to help increase the number of donated organs available for transplant.
- Educate the public about the need for organ and tissue donation. Serve the African-American, Latino and Asian minority communities with specific educational programs.
- Continue to support and maintain contact with donor families following the donation process, facilitating communication between recipients and donor families, if both parties desire.

### Fast Facts:

- More than 108,000 men, women and children are waiting for a lifesaving transplant nationally.
- Every 11 minutes another name is added to the list.
- Every day 18 people die waiting.
- Although minorities donate in proportion to their share of the population, their need for transplants is much greater. That's because some diseases of the kidney, heart, lung, pancreas and liver that can lead to organ failure are found more frequently in minority populations than in the general population.
- One donor has the ability to save up to 80 lives.
- It takes as much time to send an email or text as it does to save a life by registering as an organ and tissue donor at [www.DonateLifeTexas.org](http://www.DonateLifeTexas.org).

### One Donor Can:

- Donate kidneys to free two people from dialysis treatments needed to sustain life.
- Save the lives of patients awaiting heart, liver, lung or pancreas transplants.
- Give sight to two people through the donation of corneas.
- Donate bones to repair injured joints or to help save a limb threatened by cancer.
- Help burn victims heal more quickly through donation of skin.
- Provide healthy heart valves for someone whose life is threatened by malfunctioning or diseased valves.
- **SAVE A LIFE**

**Our Mission: LifeGift strives to save and enhance lives by maximizing organ and tissue donation.**

### FAQ About Donation:

**Who can be a donor?** Anyone who meets the suitability criteria for any organs or tissues, providing that the individual or family members give consent, can be a donor. Suitability criteria vary depending on the organ or tissue and its condition at the time of death.

**What can be donated?** Currently, someone may be able to donate his or her heart, kidneys, liver, lungs, pancreas and small intestine depending on their age, medical condition and circumstances at the time of death. Each organ is evaluated for possible donation individually. Many patients who are organ donors may also be candidates for tissue donation following the organ recovery.

**If someone has been declared brain dead, is it possible for them to recover?** No. It is impossible to recover from brain death. Brain death should not be confused with coma or persistent vegetative state. Death can occur in one of two ways: first, when the heart and lungs stop functioning; and second, when the brain stops functioning. Brain death occurs when a person has irreversible, catastrophic brain injury, which causes brain activity to stop permanently. Heart and lung functions can only be maintained with the help of a mechanical ventilator.

**My family members do not believe in donation. How can I make sure that I will be a donor?** Sometimes resistance to donation is simply an unwillingness to contemplate the death of a loved one. The best thing you can do is register your intent to become an organ and tissue donor at [www.DonateLifeTexas.org](http://www.DonateLifeTexas.org) — the official state registry of Texas. This registry serves as your official consent to become a donor. It is a legally-binding document, which means at the time of your death, it will override any decision made by your family. It is important to inform your family about your decision to register as a donor.

**Can an organ donor also be a tissue donor?** Yes. If a donor meets the criteria, both organs and tissues can be removed at the same time.

**Is there an age limit to be able to donate?** There is no age limit for donation. LifeGift has successfully procured organs and tissues from donors as young as a few days to adults in their 90s. A patient's medical history is more important than the age of the donor. If a patient has normally functioning organs and is in good health, then organ donation is certainly an option.

**What kind of diseases affect donation?** Presence of active cancer, active HIV or active infection would absolutely rule out donation. If a person has a history of Hepatitis, more information would need to be obtained at the time of death. Patients who have Hepatitis C may still donate organs to a patient who also has Hepatitis C. The same is true for Hepatitis B - but this happens less frequently.

**Will my decision affect 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 medical team treating you is completely separate from the transplant team. LifeGift notifies the transplant team following consent to donation.

**Is donation aligned with my religious views?** There are no religions that oppose donation.

**Will my family have to pay for donation?** There is no charge to the donor family. All hospital costs related to the organ recovery are paid for by the Organ Procurement Organization (OPO).

**When must organs be removed?** Organs must be removed as soon as possible after the determination of brain death while circulation is being maintained artificially. Tissue may be removed within 12 to 24 hours.

**Will donation interfere with funeral arrangements?** Donation does not disfigure the body or delay funeral arrangements. Organs and tissue are removed with respect and dignity in an operating room under sterile conditions.

### How is a potential recipient identified?

The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) maintains a national computerized list of donors and candidates for transplant. Recipients are identified through a comprehensive evaluation of medical compatibility, including size and blood type, medical urgency and location. The social or financial situations of the recipients are not factors in determining who receives a transplant.

**Will the recipient know the identity of the donor?** The identities of both the recipient and the donor family are confidential. Some donor families and recipients correspond anonymously. On occasion, when both sides wish to correspond directly or meet, LifeGift will help facilitate the communication or meeting.

**How successful are organ transplants?** Success rates for vital organs average 80 - 90 percent, and more than 90 percent for various types of tissue transplants.

### What happens when there is a need for a transplant and insurance won't cover it?

Most organ transplants are covered by third party reimbursement insurance and Medicaid/Medicare. In some instances, there may be an insurance cap whereby the member is only eligible for a certain amount of funding for surgical procedures. In those cases, every transplant program has social workers who will investigate those cases and support the patient in terms of writing special requests and/or petitioning the cap. We have seldom heard of patients needing lifesaving organs that have been turned down because of insurance limits.

### Which factors are considered, (and in what order), when you decide who gets an available organ donation?

Organs are placed according to six standard criteria: 1. Severity of illness 2. Time waiting (when were they placed on the list) 3. Blood type 4. Tissue Type 5. Size (Organs must fit properly in the thoracic cavity) 6. Location (When we recover

organs in our area, we make every effort to place them in our area. The number of miles away from the transplant center is included in the patient's placement criteria on the list.)

**Does my registration grant consent for whole body donation?** Registering as an organ and tissue donor does not grant permission for your whole body to be donated to a medical school. Organ and tissue donation for transplant or research is not the same as willed body donation. Willed whole body programs are usually associated with teaching hospitals at major universities, and arrangements must be made in advance directly with the institutions. Please note: should you choose to consent to whole body donation, you may be unable to donate your organs or tissues for transplantation. This is specific to each institution.

### Can an individual or families designate that donated organs or tissues go to a specific individual?

The national policy, set by the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), is designed whereby the sickest person usually gets a donated organ from a deceased individual. Blood type and size also impact who will receive a particular donated organ. The policy does allow for directed donation, whereby an organ is designated to go to someone — by name. The most common scenario is a directed donation to someone known personally by the donor family. The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (UAGA) and Texas Anatomical Gift Act state that a person, hospital or physician can receive a particular organ. UNOS policy states that donation of an organ(s) cannot discriminate against a person or class of persons on the basis of race, national origin, religion, gender or similar characteristic. LifeGift works diligently to see that the system's policies are carried out so that a fair and equitable system remains for all the transplant candidates awaiting a lifesaving organ transplant. We do not favor one candidate over any other.



[www.DonateLifeTexas.org](http://www.DonateLifeTexas.org)

The Glenda P. Dawson Donate Life–Texas Registry is the official state organ, tissue and eye donor registry.

- Historically, signing a donor card and placing the "donor" sticker on your driver license served as an important symbol of your intent, however it did not place you on the official state registry.
- In 2005, Texas joined 40 other states in the country by creating its own state donor registry.
- Registering to become an organ, tissue and eye donor ensures your intent will be carried out after you die.
- You have the power to donate life. Sign up today to become an organ, tissue and eye donor. Your generosity can save the lives of 80 people.
- If you renewed your driver's license in or after January 2010, and registered to be an organ donor, your license will have a red heart on the bottom right-hand corner, and you are already on the official state registry.

## FAQ About the Registry:

### What is the objective of the Donate Life Texas registry?

The mission of the Glenda P. Dawson Donate Life Texas registry is to save and enhance lives by enabling Texans to provide their consent to donate organs and/or tissues and eyes to those in need.

### How do I join the registry?

Texans can sign up for free when renewing or applying for a driver's license. They can also register through the DMV (formerly TxDOT) when they renew their vehicle registration. Texans can also register online at [www.donatelifetexas.org](http://www.donatelifetexas.org).

### How does the organ/tissue donation process work with the registry?

All hospitals are required by federal law to contact their designated organ procurement organization (OPO) when they identify a patient whose life-threatening condition may make the person eligible to be an organ donor. Once the OPO is contacted, it checks the registry to see if that individual has registered to be an organ, tissue or eye donor. If the potential donor is registered, the information will be shared with the family and they will be consulted about the donor's medical/social history. The OPO then evaluates the medical suitability of the donor, manages the medical care of the donor until transplantation can take place, and taps into a national database (UNOS) to match the donor and patient in need of a transplant based on medical criteria. The OPO oversees the transport of organs and the surgeons who will perform the transplant.

### Who operates the registry?

The Texas Department of State Health Services maintains the donor registry. Only professionals from the state's organ procurement organizations (OPOs) and tissue and eye banks can access the information in the database.

### Should Texans be concerned about submitting personal information to the donor registry?

All information submitted will be used only for official registry transplant business and will be kept completely confidential and secure. The information is accessible as "read only" by authorized organ and tissue recovery personnel only.

### What happens if my personal information changes?

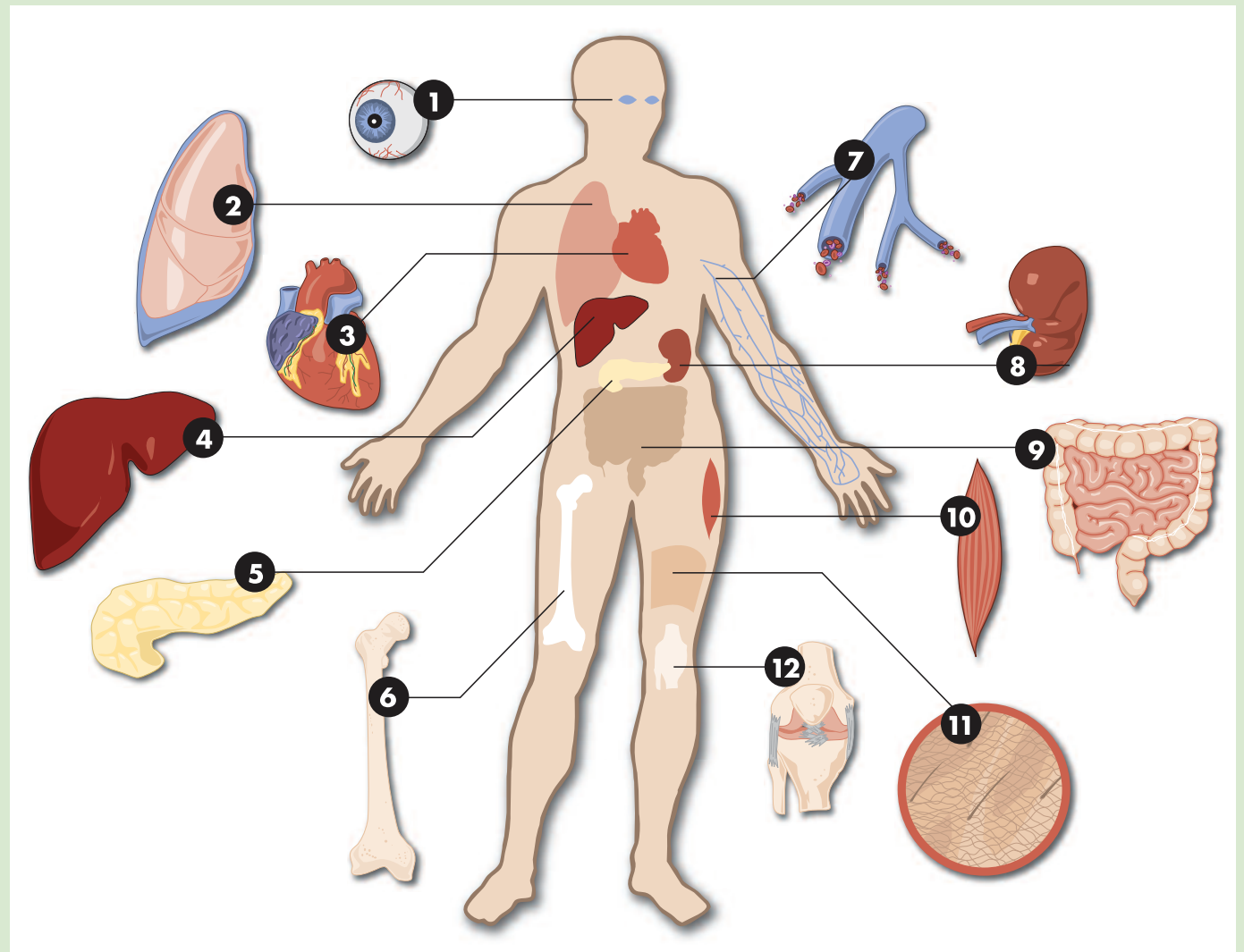
Your personal information, such as your address or married name, can be changed any time by accessing your profile at [www.DonateLifeTexas.org](http://www.DonateLifeTexas.org). If you originally signed up online, you will need your registration ID and password to access your information. If you signed up through the DPS, you will need your birth date and driver's license number.

### What if I change my mind after I sign up for the registry?

You may remove your name from the registry at any time by accessing your profile online.

### Who can sign up on the Glenda P. Dawson Donate Life-Texas registry?

Texans who are at least 18 years old can register their consent to donate organs and tissues upon their death. Minors must have parental consent.



## Gifts of Donation:

### 1. EYES/CORNEAS

*Function:* allows light in to provide sight  
*Application:* restores vision

### 2. LUNGS

*Function:* provides oxygen to the blood  
*Application:* replacement for patients with cystic fibrosis, emphysema or other end-stage disease

### 3. HEART/HEART VALVES

*Function:* pumps blood to the body  
*Application:* organ and aortic pulmonary and mitral valves can be transplanted to correct defects

### 4. LIVER

*Function:* regulates energy, breaking down proteins, and removing wastes from the blood  
*Application:* replacement for patients with end-stage liver disease, hepatitis or cirrhosis

### 5. PANCREAS

*Function:* secretes enzymes necessary for digestion and insulin to regulate blood sugar  
*Application:* replacement of diseased pancreas in the diabetic; eliminates need for insulin

### 6. BONE

*Function:* structural support of the body, protects vital organs  
*Application:* facial reconstruction, limb salvage, correction of birth defects, cancer treatments, spinal and oral surgery

### 7. VEINS

*Function:* returns deoxygenated blood to the heart  
*Application:* restores blood flow to ischemic areas of the heart; restores blood flow for limb salvage, dialysis access

### 8. KIDNEYS

*Function:* extracts wastes and excess water from the blood; produces hormones that help regulate blood pressure  
*Application:* replacement for patients with failure, removing them from dialysis

### 9. SMALL INTESTINE

*Function:* aids in digestion and the absorption of nutrients into the body  
*Application:* restores the absorption of nutrients and other dietary needs

### 10. FASCIA

*Function:* fibrous membrane that covers, supports and separates the muscles  
*Application:* restores support, limb and soft tissue repair, reconstructive and facial repair

### 11. SKIN

*Function:* provides the body with protection from infection and necessary temperature control  
*Application:* restores the protective barrier to the body, protects against infection

### 12. CARTILAGE

*Function:* connective tissue that serves as structural support in some areas (e.g., nose and outer ear)  
*Application:* reconstructive surgery