

## South Africa needs organ donors

In South Africa, approximately 4 300 adults and children are currently awaiting life-saving transplants, with less than 600 transplants performed each year.

Our country boasts many firsts in this field; the first heart transplant in 1967, the first penis transplant in 2015, and the first HIV-positive donor to HIV-positive recipient kidney transplant ... something to be truly proud of. However, with less than 1% of South Africans registered as organ donors, organ donation remains stagnant.

People who are on an organ waiting list typically have end-stage organ disease that significantly impacts their quality of life and may be near the end of their life. Receiving an organ can become a life-changing event for these people. *This is where you can help.* Becoming a registered organ donor is a powerful and potentially life-saving decision. However, if the concept makes you feel uneasy, maybe answers to frequently asked questions will give you perspective.

### How do you become a potential organ donor?

It's quick and easy. Contact the Organ Donor Foundation's toll-free line at 0800 2266 11 or register online at [www.odf.org.za](http://www.odf.org.za). Once you've been successfully registered, the *Organ Donor Foundation* will send you an organ donor card to carry in your wallet, as well as stickers to stick on your driver's licence and ID document to make your intentions known in case of an emergency. Also, you need to talk to your family; your organs can't be procured for transplantation without consent from your next-of-kin.

### What tests do you have to undergo to register?

None. All medical tests will be done after death.

### Who qualifies to be an organ donor?

Any person in good health can be an organ donor.

### Which organs can be transplanted?

The heart, liver, kidneys, lungs and the pancreas can be transplanted. You can also donate skin, bones, corneas, tendons and heart valves.

### What if you have an existing medical condition?

Having a medical condition does not necessarily prevent a person from becoming an organ/tissue donor. A disease in one organ does not preclude other organs from being donated. The decision about which organs/tissue which can be used will be established at the time of death.

### Are there any costs involved in signing up as an organ donor?

No.

### Does your family have to pay for the donation?

No, there are no costs involved for the donor or his family.

### Would your family be compensated for the donation?

No, organ donation is a gift.

### Would it leave your body disfigured?

No. The utmost respect and dignity are given to the donor at all times. The recovery of organs and tissue is carried out with great care by surgeons and trained staff.

### Could you agree to donate only some organs and not others?

Yes, inform your family which organs/tissue you don't wish to donate.

### Can you change your mind if you have already registered?

Yes. Simply tear up your organ donor card and remove the stickers from your ID document and driver's licence. Also, inform your family that you no longer wish to be a donor.

Think about it, one organ donor can save up to 7 lives.

Your decision to be a donor could allow something positive to be gained from loss.

Source: [getsavvi.co.za](http://getsavvi.co.za), [health24.com](http://health24.com), [odf.org.za](http://odf.org.za), [nebraskamed.com](http://nebraskamed.com), [brandsouthafrica.com](http://brandsouthafrica.com), [adventhealth.com](http://adventhealth.com), [westerncape.gov.za](http://westerncape.gov.za), [keckmedicine.org](http://keckmedicine.org), [penmedicine.org](http://penmedicine.org)