

Saving a Life is easier than you think!

Doctors train for many years to develop their special lifesaving skills. But you can make the choice to save a life in only a few minutes.

Through the gift of organ donation, you can save a life and improve the quality of life for many people.

You don't need any special skills to be an organ donor, you just need to make the choice.

Why donate?

One organ donor can help more than 10 people by:

- saving a life (eg. heart transplant);
- improving the quality of life (eg. renal transplant); or
- restoring body function (eg. corneal (of the eye) transplant).

Australia has a high survival rate for transplant recipients with around 800 Australians benefiting from successful organ transplantation each year.

Even so, Australia continues to have one of the lowest organ donation rates in the world.

Currently, 1800 people are on the organ transplantation list and it is more than likely 100 of those people will die before receiving a transplant.

Who can donate?

Everyone can choose to be an organ donor.

Your age and health will be considered, but for some organs and tissues there is no donor age limit.

Children under 12 years can become donors with the authorisation of their parents or guardian.

There are children waiting on the transplant list for donor organs.

What can I donate?

- organs include kidneys, heart, lungs, liver and pancreas.
- tissues include corneas, heart valves, bone and skin.

You can choose which organs and tissues you want to donate.

How can I donate?

Talk to your family

Discuss organ donation with your family and tell them your wishes.

Families will usually be asked to consent to donate their loved one's organs. Families normally support their loved one's wishes.

Talk to your family doctor

Your family doctor will be happy to answer any questions or concerns you or your family have regarding organ and tissue donation.

Register with the Australian Organ Donor Registry

By registering with the Australian Organ Donor Registry, your wishes can be verified 24 hours a day, seven days a week by authorised medical personnel, anywhere in Australia.

Contact your State or Territory motor registry

In some States and Territories, you can indicate your donor wishes on your driver's licence.

Can I change my mind about being an organ donor?

Yes. You can change your details on the Australian Organ Donor Registry. Always make sure to tell your family of any changes.

How will they know if I am really dead and not just in a coma?

Medical tests can clearly show the difference between coma and brain death.

In a coma there remains some brain function and recovery may still be possible.

In 'brain death' (the legal definition of death in Australia) there is irreversible loss of brain function and recovery is not possible. In brain death, the person is dead and cannot feel pain and has no awareness.

Under what circumstances would I be considered as an organ donor?

Suitability for organ donation is determined after death. Each case is looked at individually.

Organ donation can only occur following brain death in an Intensive Care Unit of a hospital.

Tissues can be donated up to 24 hours following death, so a potential tissue donor does not need to have died in hospital.

If my condition deteriorates in hospital, will they let me die if I am a registered donor?

No. A doctor's first duty is to the patient and saving their life.

Organ donation is only considered if the patient dies, despite all medical efforts.

After death, a different team of doctors is responsible for the process of organ donation and transplantation.