

ORGAN DONATION FOR TRANSPLANTATION IN ONTARIO

Overview

The issue of organ donation and transplantation is literally one of life and death for thousands of Ontarians. Every year in Ontario, more than 2,000 people have their lives enhanced or saved by organ transplants. Organ donation for transplantation is a critical component of our health care system.

Through the Trillium Gift of Life Network, the Government of Ontario promotes organ donation. The Network is dedicated to planning, promoting, coordinating and supporting organ and tissue donation in Ontario so that more lives can be saved through transplantation.

Funding

In 2006-07 the Ontario Government is investing an estimated \$11.7 million to support organ donation activities of the Trillium Gift of Life Network and an additional \$15.58 million to support transplantation across the province. Last year, 825 successful transplants were completed. The funding provided by the government covers the cost of the donation and transplant surgery. There is no cost to the donor family or recipient.

Ways people can donate organs

The primary motivation for deciding to become an organ donor is to help someone else. One donor's generosity can result in as many as 25 tissues and organs for transplantation. Thirty per cent of the people needing a transplant will die while they are on the waiting list.

In Ontario, people may indicate their decision to donate all or only specific organs. People's gift of organs is available equally to all potential recipients, based on need and other criteria. Make sure your family knows the details of your decision.

The available options for people wishing to donate organs are:

1. Living Organ Donation - Living donation occurs when a living person donates an organ or part of an organ for transplant to another person in need – usually a kidney or liver. Living donors are most often family members or close friends of the recipient.
2. Donation after Cardiac Death (DCD) - DCD offers families the option of donation in cases where neurological criteria for death have not been met, and the decision to withdraw life-sustaining treatment has been made. A DCD patient has no hope of survival or meaningful functional status.

3. Donation after Neurological Determination of Death (NDD) - Deceased organ donation can take place when someone has been declared brain dead, a doctor has determined the organs can be used for transplant, and loved ones opt to artificially maintain vital organs by ventilator to keep them suitable for transplant.

The easiest way to become an organ donor is to request and complete a Trillium Gift of Life Network donor card – Ontario’s single official donor card. For further information, contact the Trillium Gift of Life Network at 1-800-263-2833 or visit their website at www.giftoflife.on.ca.

Allowable organs for donation and transplantation

Organs include the kidneys, heart, lungs, liver, pancreas, bowel and stomach.

Successes

Success rates for transplants vary depending on the organ, but in general 85-95% of transplants are successful one year after surgery.

In 2005, 825 lives were saved through successful organ transplantation in Ontario. The survival rate for patients who *do* receive transplants continues to improve with most transplant patients living extended, high quality, normal lives.

More information about organ donation

For more information about organ donation, contact the Trillium Gift of Life Network at 1-800-263-2833 or visit their website at www.giftoflife.on.ca. You can also find more information on the Ministry of Health Long-Term Care website at www.health.gov.on.ca.