



How to have the discussion about organ and tissue donation

One organ and tissue donor can save the lives of up to 10 people.

If you have made a decision about becoming an organ and tissue donor it is important to discuss it with your family. That is because in Australia the family of every organ and tissue donor will be asked to confirm their donation decision. Families that know each other's donation decisions are more likely to uphold those decisions.

This is important because while the majority of Australians are willing to become donors, few will have the opportunity to do so. Only around 1% of people who die in hospital do so in the specific circumstances for potential organ donation and there are around 1,600 people on waiting lists at any one time.

Organ and tissue donation may feel like a difficult topic to raise with your family. Or you might just feel like it is hard to find the time to talk about it. This sheet gives you some simple practical tips to start the conversation.

You can also help your family and friends have (and remember) the discussion about organ and tissue donation.

First, find out the facts about organ and tissue donation. You can find information including resources in your language or providing information about your religion's position on organ and tissue donation at www.donatelife.gov.au

So when is a good time to have this discussion and how do you start it?

When is a Good Time to Start a Family Discussion?

Today. You can use everyday situations to start a discussion about important life issues including decisions about organ and tissue donation. These might include:

- The next time your family sits down for a meal
- Getting life insurance or writing a will
- Leaving home for the first time
- Celebrating a family anniversary or other special occasion
- Getting a check-up by your GP
- Hearing about someone who has become a donor, needs a transplant or has just had a transplant.

Once you have had the discussion with your family about each other's donation decisions, these events can provide a good opportunity to repeat your decision to ensure they are remembered.

Some Conversation Starters

Initiating a discussion about organ and tissue donation may be difficult for some people. Raising the issue of death may be uncomfortable or even considered taboo, especially where young people are involved.

To help initiate the discussion, the following conversation starters may be useful:

- I have just heard that my friend has registered to become an organ and tissue donor and I am thinking about registering too. What is your view about organ and tissue donation?
- I have just seen this brochure about organ and tissue donation. Did you know that one organ and tissue donor can save the lives of up to 10 people? I have the registration form here and am thinking of registering to become a donor myself.

- I just saw this terrible accident on the news and it got me thinking about organ and tissue donation. I did some research and saw that Australia really needs more organ and tissue donors and that one donor can transform the lives of more than 10 people.
- Only around 1% of people die under the specific circumstances in hospital, where organ donation is possible, with many more having the opportunity to donate tissue. Organ donation can only occur in very specific circumstances in intensive care or in hospital accident and emergency departments. I think I will check it out some more and register to become a donor.
- I was at this community festival where they spoke about taking the time to reflect on life and about giving. I thought about becoming an organ and tissue donor and decided I would look into it. It seems like a good thing to do.
- Did you know that just about all religions support organ and tissue donation? It looks like our religion is ok with organ and tissue donation too. Now that I know it is acceptable I will register on the Australian Organ Donor Register. I think it is a good thing to do and I may be able to save lives should I ever become an organ and tissue donor.

Did You Know?

The decision to become a donor is a personal and important one. To make the right decision for yourself, you need to have the facts so that your decision is informed. Your family might also need time to discover the facts and make their own decisions.

DISCOVER the facts about organ and tissue donation

DECIDE about becoming a donor, and register your decision with the Australian Organ Donor Register

DISCUSS your decision with the people close to you.

For more information or to register your decision with the Australian Organ Donor Register visit www.donatelife.gov.au