

Healthy Habits

Tips for reaching and maintaining your optimum state of health

April is National Donate Life Month

National Donate Life Month is a time to raise public awareness of the critical need for organ, tissue, marrow, and blood donation.

It was established to promote awareness of donation of not only organs and tissues, but also marrow and blood. An entire month focused upon donation awareness and donation also gives donation and transplant organizations more time to sponsor public awareness activities in their communities.

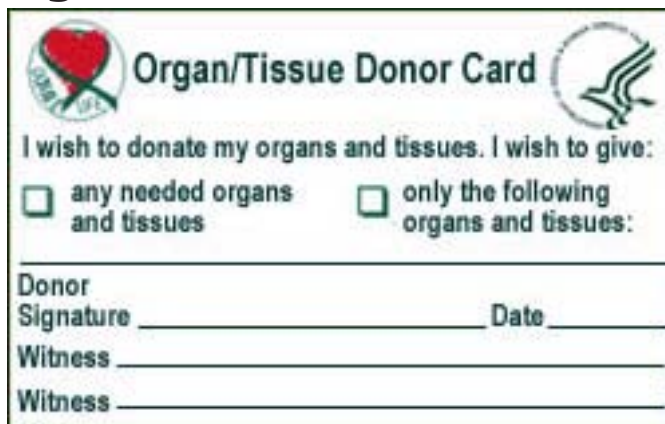
Is the need really *that* great?

More than 98,000 people are waiting for an organ donation that will save or improve their life. On a daily basis, about 77 people in the United States receive the organ transplant they so desperately need, however, 19 others still die each day while waiting for transplants because of the shortage of donated organs.

In Virginia alone, an estimated three people die each week waiting for a life-saving organ transplant that doesn't come in time due to a *critical* shortage of donors right here at home.

How much good can one person do?

Believe it or not, one person can donate a heart, a liver, two kidneys, two lungs, and a pancreas - - that is enough to save **seven** lives. A single eye donor can help up to ten individuals. Just one tissue donor can enhance the lives of more than fifty people. Furthermore, the donation costs nothing for the donor or the donor's family, donation does not affect customary funeral activities and in most cases, anyone can be a donor.



The image shows a sample of an Organ/Tissue Donor Card. It features a red heart icon on the left and a stylized bird icon on the right. The text reads: "Organ/Tissue Donor Card", "I wish to donate my organs and tissues. I wish to give:", followed by two checkboxes: "any needed organs and tissues" and "only the following organs and tissues:". Below this are lines for "Donor Signature", "Date", "Witness", and another "Witness" line.

Don't leave home without it!
Visit www.organdonor.gov or www.save7lives.org
to sign up today and start saving lives.

What can I do to help?

Plenty. Start by making today the day you:

- Visit save7lives.org and organdonor.gov to answer any questions you have about organ donation.
- Sign-up as an organ and tissue donor on the web at either site listed above or, in person, at the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.
- Go to optimahealth.com to obtain your Advance Directive Form, so that your wishes are clear concerning organ donation.
- Talk to your loved ones about your decision and encourage them to do the same.
- Encourage your company to join the save7lives.org workplace program.

Most importantly, don't put off signing up for organ donation; there are 19 people - - mothers, fathers, siblings and children - - that may not live another day without your help. Get the word out and encourage others, too. The life *they* save could be your own.

The material contained in Healthy Habits is not intended to be medical advice on any particular matter. Readers should seek appropriate professional advice before acting on the basis of any information contained in this publication. This information is provided courtesy of Optima Health.