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# ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN

APRIL 2012

Reprinted by:  
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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: ORGAN DONATIONS

**A**pril is National Donate Life Month. Although 90 percent of Americans say they support organ donation, only 30 percent know how to become a donor. As of January 2012, there were over 112,000 patients waiting for either an organ or tissue transplant. There have been great advances in medical technology and organ and tissue donation, however the need for organs and tissues still greatly outnumbers the donors.

Have you considered donating your organs but been hesitant to do so? Here is some additional information on adding your name to the donation list and some answers to common questions regarding organ donation.

**Organs that can be donated:**

- Heart              • Lungs
- Kidneys            • Pancreas
- Liver               • Small bowel

**Tissues that can be donated:**

- Whole eye / Corneas
- Heart valves
- Skin
- Bone
- Certain veins



Anyone thinking about organ or tissue donation should talk with their family about their wishes. They may wish to talk to their religious leaders as well. If they still feel as though they are able to donate organs or tissues, they should simply visit [donatelifeky.org](http://donatelifeky.org) and complete the online registry form. If after they have registered to be a donor, they change their mind about the decision, they can log onto the same website and change the intention to donate.

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## **Register to be an organ donor at [DonateLifeKY.org](http://DonateLifeKY.org)**

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### **Who can donate?**

Age limitations may apply to some specific organs and tissues, but in general, anyone who wishes to donate can register. Children under 18 can legally donate organs and/or tissues with the approval of a parent or guardian.

### **What are the ethics of organ and tissue donation?**

The gift of an organ or tissue critical to the life of another human being is acceptable to most religions. If you have any questions in this regard, consult your religious leader. If you would like to see how the different religions view organ donation, a list can be found at <http://www.organdonor.gov/about/religiousviews.html>

### **Will the quality of medical or nursing care be changed because of my decision to become a donor?**

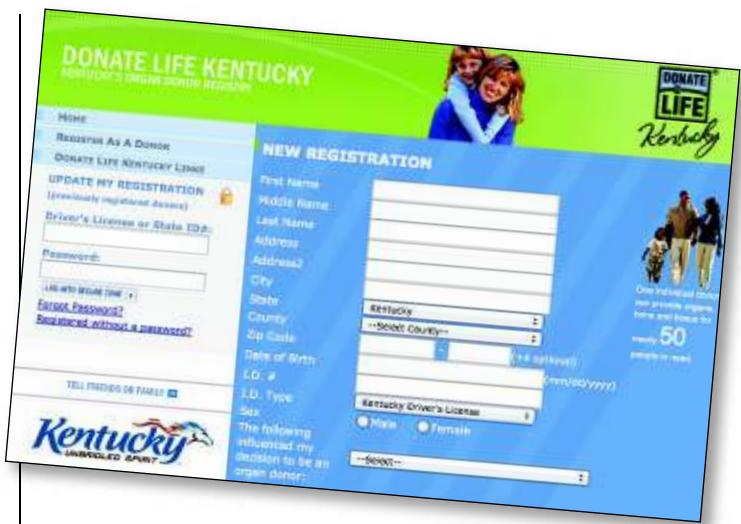
No. The quality of medical and nursing care will not change if you become an organ or tissue donor. All patients should continue to receive the care they need and deserve, since organ/tissue donation is only effective in the event of a death.

### **How do organ/tissue recovery programs learn of potential donors?**

When health care employees have identified a potential donor, they will contact Kentucky Organ Donor Affiliates (KODA). A specialist, called a procurement transplant coordinator, then assists the medical center and the donor family through the medical, legal and ethical parts of the donation.

### **Will the identity of the recipients be revealed to the donor's family?**

The identity of both the donor and the recipient is kept confidential. KODA will provide the donor's family with basic information about the recipient's age, sex, profession and general



location. If the recipient AND donor family express the desire to correspond, KODA can enable the process.

### **Will my family be charged for the donation?**

No. All costs related to the donation within the KODA service area will be paid by KODA. Organ procurement organizations in all states pay all the costs related with donation.

Donating your organs or tissues can save another person's life. Take the time to decide whether organ donation is the right choice for you.

#### **REFERENCES:**

- Kentucky Organ Donor Affiliates <http://kyorgandonor.org/FAQ.aspx>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services <http://www.organdonor.gov>

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