

# Organ and Tissue Donation Myths and Facts

Unsure about organ and tissue donation? Don't let misinformation keep you from offering hope. Here are the answers to some common myths.

**MYTH:** *There are plenty of donors, so my organs and tissue aren't really needed.*

**FACT:** Most people are surprised to learn how rare it is to die in a way that allows for organ donation. To donate an organ such as a heart, patients must die in hospital while on life support, and these patients account for only a small percentage of deaths.



Did You  
Know?

**ONE** organ donor can save up to 8 lives and enhance 75 more through tissue donation.

**MYTH:** *If doctors know I support organ and tissue donation, they won't work as hard to save my life.*

**FACT:** The number one priority of healthcare providers is to save the lives of sick or injured people. To ensure you receive the best possible care, the medical professionals who care for you before death are not the same professionals involved in the recovery or transplantation of your organs or tissue.

**MYTH:** *I have to die to donate my organs and tissue.*

**FACT:** Certain organs (e.g., kidneys) and some tissue (e.g., bone) can be donated by living donors. You can be a living donor by providing an organ or tissue to a family member or another person in need.

Did You  
Know?

**40-50%** of kidney transplants in Saskatchewan are made possible through living donors.

**MYTH:** *Organ and tissue donation is against my religion.*

**FACT:** Most major religions support organ and tissue donation and consider it an act of charity and goodwill. Staff at the Saskatchewan Transplant Program are available to provide more information or to connect you with elders, leaders or spiritual advisors in your religious communities.

**MYTH:** *I am unable to be an organ donor because of my age, illness or physical condition.*

**FACT:** People of all ages and medical histories can donate organs and tissue when they die, including transplant recipients. At time of death, each person's medical condition is evaluated to determine what organs and tissue are suitable for donation.

Did You Know?

**The Oldest** person to be an organ donor (kidney) in Canada was 92 years old.

**MYTH:** *Transplant recipients can easily find out the identity of their donors.*

**FACT:** Organ and tissue donation is anonymous. However, the Saskatchewan Transplant Program does offer donors and recipients the opportunity to correspond in writing through de-identified letters delivered and received through the program.

**MYTH:** *The decision to donate is too much to ask of my family after I have died.*

**FACT:** The decision to donate a loved one's organs and tissue after death can be very difficult. You can help make this decision easier by talking to your family about your wishes before you die. Your family or next of kin will be supported no matter what decision they make regarding organ and tissue donation.

Did You Know?

**More Than** 90 people in Saskatchewan are waiting for a kidney transplant.

**MYTH:** *After donating, my family won't be able to view my body in an open casket at my funeral.*

**FACT:** All donated organs and tissue are removed surgically, and the body of each donor is treated with the utmost respect and dignity. After donating, an open casket is entirely possible.

**MYTH:** *To support donation, all I have to do is put an organ and tissue donor sticker on my health card.*

**FACT:** In Saskatchewan, organs and tissue cannot be donated without your family or next-of-kin's consent, even if the organ and tissue donor sticker is on your health card. Ensuring that your loved ones know you support organ and tissue donation will help them make this important decision on your behalf after you have died.

**More organ and tissue donors are needed in Saskatchewan. With your help, we can offer hope to those waiting for a transplant.**

### Saskatchewan Transplant Program

**In Saskatoon:**

St. Paul's Hospital  
1702 20th St.W.  
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0Z9  
1-306-655-5054

**In Regina:**

Kidney Health Centre  
235 Albert St. N.  
Regina, SK S4R 3C2  
1-306-766-6477

### The SHA Donation Program:

St. Paul's Hospital  
1702 20th St.W.  
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0Z9  
1-306-655-0593  
Email: SHA.donationprogram@saskhealthauthority.ca

**For more information, visit [www.SaskHealthAuthority.ca/organdonation](http://www.SaskHealthAuthority.ca/organdonation)**