



**April is National Donate Life Month**, a celebration of the lifesaving gift of an organ or tissue transplant. Each April, we encourage individuals to learn about organ/tissue donation so they can make an informed and educated decision about signing up for the registry. Joining the Illinois Donor Registry at [www.LifeGoesOn.com](http://www.LifeGoesOn.com) only takes 30 seconds and can help change the lives of up to 25 people. Read on to learn more about organ/tissue donation.

## **There are three types of donation**

In addition to organ/tissue donation that occurs after a person is deceased, there is also **living donation**, in which an individual can donate a whole or partial organ to someone in need while alive. Living donors help shorten the waiting list for others, and they live a normal, healthy life post-donation. The third type of donation is **donating the body to science or “willed body” donation** after death. This involves donating your body for medical research to the Anatomical Gift Association (AGA) or another body donation organization. If an individual chooses the AGA, the organization then delivers the body to one of its affiliated teaching hospitals or medical schools for human anatomy educational purposes. All three types of donation are described in detail below with links provided for additional information.

### **Organ/Tissue Donation**

The mission of the Secretary of State’s Organ/Tissue Donor Program is to strengthen Illinois’ Organ/Tissue Donor Registry through outreach and registration initiatives. The office maintains the Illinois Donor Registry, the database of individuals in Illinois who have said yes to donation, which now has more than 7 million registrants. The larger the donor pool, the greater the chance of a match for those waiting to receive a transplant. Organ and tissue donors save lives, restore sight and improve the quality of life for recipients across Illinois every day. In Illinois, 4,000 people wait for transplants of all kinds — kidney, liver, heart, lungs, small intestines and pancreas. These six organs can save the lives of as many as nine individuals. Donated tissues such as corneas, bones, ligaments and skin can vastly improve life for others. Every 10 minutes another name is added to the transplant waiting list in Illinois, and sadly, 22 people die each day when organs they need are not available. Many transplant recipients live long and healthy lives post-transplant and celebrate their transplant anniversaries as the day they were given their lifesaving gift.

Click here for more facts on organ/tissue donation.

<https://www.lifegoeson.com/donation/faqmyths.html#myths>

### **What can you do to help?**

Register your donor decision at the Illinois Donor Registry (must be at least 16-years-old) and share your decision with family and friends. Ask friends if they are registered and discuss the facts about donation with them. Do not believe the many myths and misconceptions, many times perpetuated in the media, about donation. The gift of life is the greatest thing you can give to another individual. It takes just 30 seconds to register. Visit [www.LifeGoesOn.com](http://www.LifeGoesOn.com) to join the registry today.

## **Living Donation**

Living Donation is when an individual donates a whole or partial organ to another person. The most common living donation is a kidney, followed by a partial liver donation. Living organ donation was developed as a direct result of the critical shortage of deceased donors. Living donation provides individuals an opportunity to save a life while they are still alive, shortening the waiting time for the person who is in need of a transplant. Since there is no living donor registry, anyone considering becoming a living donor should discuss it with doctors at a transplant center. \*Most people interested in being a living donor have someone in mind they want to help, but others have been altruistic donors — living donors to someone they do not know on the waiting list. Either way, the living donor has saved a life.

Living kidney donors can also participate in paired kidney programs or kidney swaps or exchanges — a transplant option for people who are waiting for a kidney, but the family member who wants to donate to them is incompatible. The kidney exchange helps locate other incompatible pairs who might want to exchange donors, and can result in multiple successful transplants.

### **Who is eligible to be a living donor?**

Individuals considering living donation should be in good physical and mental health and at least 18 years old. To be a living liver donor, you must be between the ages of 18 and 55; be in good mental and physical health with no history of liver disease, pulmonary hypertension, HIV, active cancers, or other significant diseases; have a body mass index (BMI) less than or equal to 32; and not be engaged in active ongoing drug or substance abuse.

The living donor evaluation process usually includes an initial screening, which may be completed online, in person or over the phone; blood tests to see if you are compatible with the recipient; a thorough physical examination; a psychological evaluation; and consent.

Living donors can potentially donate:

- **One of two kidneys**

A kidney is the most frequently donated organ from living donors. The donor's remaining kidney provides the necessary function needed to remove waste from the body.

- **One lobe of his/her liver**

Cells in the remaining lobe of the liver grow or regenerate until the liver is almost its original size. This regrowth of the liver occurs in a short period of time in both the donor and recipient.

- **A lung or part of a lung, part of the pancreas, or part of the intestines**

Although these organs do not regenerate, both the donated portion of the organ and the portion remaining with the donor are fully functioning.

\*Click below for more living donor information at each transplant center in Illinois.

Advocate Christ Hospital, Oak Lawn  
<https://www.advocatehealth.com/cmhc/>

Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago  
<https://www.luriechildrens.org/>

Loyola University Medical Center in Chicago  
<https://loyolamedicine.org/>

Northwestern Memorial Hospital  
<https://www.nm.org/locations/northwestern-memorial-hospital>

Rush University Medical Center  
<https://www.rush.edu/>

University of Chicago Medicine  
<https://www.uchicagomedicine.org/>

University of Illinois Medical Center at Chicago  
<https://hospital.uillinois.edu/>

### Springfield

Memorial Medical Center  
<https://www.memorialmedical.com/>

### Peoria

OSF St. Francis Medical Center  
<https://www.osfhealthcare.org/saint-francis/>

### **Whole Body or “Willed Body” Donation**

The third donation option is donating the body to science, also called whole body or willed body donation. In Illinois, willed body donation is regulated by the Anatomical Gift Association (AGA) (<https://www.againinois.org/>) located in Chicago. The AGA describes an anatomical gift as the donation of an individual's body after death. Allied health professionals and medical students study donations under the supervision of highly trained anatomists. They learn the fundamentals of human biology and anatomy through dissection and study of the bodies in regulated laboratories. As the AGA states, they assist in the training of thousands of medical students and health professionals annually, training that cannot be duplicated by computers or other means. In addition, other aspects of research may be advanced through whole body donation.

Eight medical schools within the state of Illinois make up the AGA, which procures, prepares and preserves donations for medical and scientific study.

Individuals who wish to donate their bodies to science via the AGA need to contact the organization at <https://www.againinois.org/> for more information. Individuals generally sign a contract agreeing to donate. These forms (one for donation, one for cremation permission) are available on the AGA website under “Donation.”

### The AGA member medical schools include:

The Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago  
<https://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/>

Loyola School of Medicine in Chicago — *see link above*

Rush Medical School in Chicago — *see link above*

University of Chicago Medicine — *see link above*

University of Illinois Medical Center — *see link above*

Midwestern University (Downers Grove)

<https://www.midwestern.edu/>

National University of Health Sciences (Lombard)

<https://www.nuhs.edu/>

Southern Illinois University in Carbondale

<https://siu.edu/>

### Other Body Donation Programs in Illinois

Northern Illinois University, Department of Biological Sciences (DeKalb)

<https://www.niu.edu/clas/biology/index.shtml>

Science Care

Website: Illinois: Donating your body to science ([sciencecare.com](http://sciencecare.com))

National Body Donor Program (St. Louis, Mo.)

<http://www.nationalbody.org/contact/>

Southern Illinois University (Carbondale)

<https://cola.siu.edu/anthro/cfar/donation.php>

|                         | Organ/Tissue Donation                        | Living Donation   | Whole Body Donation                                  |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| Objective               | Provides organs for transplant to save lives | Provides an organ from a living donor to save a life      | Advances medical research                            |
| Age (minimum/maximum)   | None to be a donor, Age 16 to register       | Generally 18 years of age                                 | None, but body must be inspected first               |
| Cost                    | No cost to the donor's family                | The health insurance of recipient pays for both           | Cost of body transportation                          |
| Advanced Directive      | Register decision or Family permission       | Work with person needing transplant and transplant center | Generally a directive is signed in advance           |
| Organ Donation Allowed? | Yes  | Yes   | May be able to designate organ/tissue donation first |

**Disclaimer:** Living donation and whole body donation are NOT options on the Illinois Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Registry. The Illinois Secretary of State's office is NOT recommending any of the above organizations, but simply providing information for individuals interested in the different types of donation available to them.