

Facts About Organs and Tissues that can be Donated



Heart

2,644 people are on the waiting list for a heart transplant. The heart is a muscular organ responsible for pumping blood through the blood vessels by repeated, rhythmic contractions. Each year thousands more adults would benefit from a heart transplant if more donated hearts were available.



Liver

16,347 people are on the waiting list for a liver transplant. Your liver helps fight infections and cleans your blood. It also helps digest food and stores energy for when you need it. You cannot live without a liver that works. Doctors do liver transplants when other treatments cannot keep a damaged liver working.



Lung

2,128 people are on the waiting list for a lung transplant. The main function of the lungs is to transport oxygen from the atmosphere into the bloodstream, and to release carbon dioxide from the bloodstream into the atmosphere. Donor lungs come from a person who has died and whose organs have been made available for transplantation.



Kidney

74,934 people are on the waiting list for a kidney transplant. Kidneys clean the blood of toxins and waste. Many transplanted kidneys come from donors who have died. Some come from a living donor. People who have transplants must take drugs to keep their body from rejecting the new kidney for the rest of their lives.



Eye

Eye transplantation is actually a corneal transplant which replaces the diseased cornea to healthy cornea of a donor's eye. Eye donations usually go to the Eye Bank which maintains records of patients needing corneal grafts, supplies the donor card to prospective donors, and has facilities to evaluate, store and distribute the eye to be used for keratoplasty or other research and training purposes.



Pancreas

1,619 people are on the waiting list for a pancreas transplant. The pancreas is an organ that makes insulin and enzymes that help the body digest and use food. A common reason that a pancreas is damaged is diabetes. Pancreas transplants can enable people with type 1 diabetes to give up insulin shots.



Bone

Bones shape, support, and protect body structures. They also aid body movements, and house tissues that produce blood cells. The donor bone is composed of a kind of latticework, and live bone cells from the recipient will begin to grow into it like plants into a trellis, substituting new bone for the donor bone.



Tissue

There are hundreds of thousands of people who need tissue transplants, so donating tissue is vitally important. The tissue gifts of 6,100 people helped to provide grafts to 231,000 people in 2005.



Intestines

222 people are on the waiting list for an intestinal transplant. The small intestine is where the most extensive part of digestion occurs. The large intestine is responsible for absorption of water and excretion of solid waste material. The main indication for an intestinal transplant is short bowel syndrome--the result of substantial loss or malfunction of absorptive intestinal surface.



Ligament

Ligaments are most often used in arthroscopic reconstruction to replace torn knee ligaments. The surgery requires strict adherence to rehabilitation therapy.



Serving those affected by kidney disease