

Donate an organ

- it can save a life



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Until recently, I, like many people, was a bit scared of becoming an organ donor. My husband is one, and has been for a long time, and he has always been totally at ease with his decision to become one. As fate would have it, it was decided that the display this month would be about organ donor month, and it gave me a reason to do some much-needed research.

Following are the two most important things that I discovered:

- That ONE organ donor can save SEVEN lives
- That there are currently 3 500 people waiting for a life-saving (and -changing) organ transplant
- That you have to be declared braindead by two independent doctors.

Because some of us may not be as 'clued up' as we should be about this sensitive, yet all important topic, here are one or two of the more common questions and answers that people ask when deciding to become an organ donor:

Who can be an organ / tissue donor?

Any person who is in good health and is clear of defined chronic diseases that might adversely affect the recipient would be considered as a possible donor.

Can I be a donor if I have an existing medical condition?

Having a medical condition does not necessarily prevent a person from becoming an organ donor. The decision about which organs will be transplanted will be established at your time of death.

How do doctors know I am really dead?

Two doctors, who are completely independent

of the transplant team, have to perform detailed tests before a person can be declared braindead. The criteria are very strictly adhered to and accepted medically, legally and ethically in South Africa and internationally.

Are there religious objections to transplantation?

Most religions support organ and tissue donation, as it is consistent with life preservation. If you are unsure, you should talk to your spiritual leader.

Can I change my mind?

Yes. You can change your mind at any time. Simply tear up your organ donor card and remove your sticker from your ID-document and driver's license. Inform your family that you no longer wish to be an organ donor.

The display

With some background information in hand we decided to focus our display on the important dates and events that helped bring organ donation to where it is today.

To do this effectively and visually, we made use of that old format we

learned about in school, timelines. We used the information that we found on the Organ Donor Foundation website, chose a few and added some simple yet effective images to the facts.

You will need:

- White paper
- Prestik
- Red paper:

The display itself was quite simple to put together. All you have to do is type up the facts and print them on white paper. Use the red paper to cut out the actual timeline and paste the facts under the appropriate line with Prestik.

For more information or to register as an organ donor, please go to www.odf.org.za.

