If you were there then, we need you now.

Organ, eye, and tissue donation for people 50 and over.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Health Resources and Services Administration
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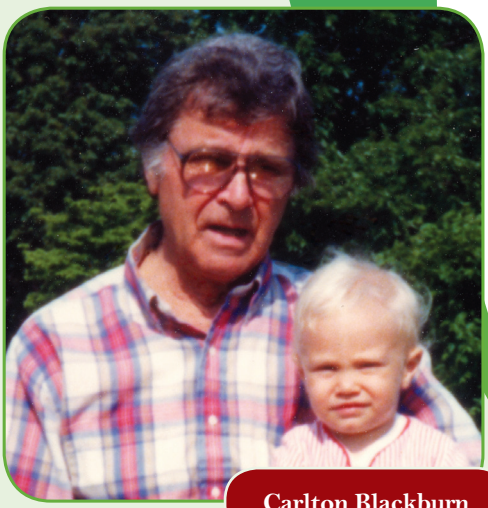
National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Aging



Carlton Blackburn

Age Is Not a Barrier

Carlton Blackburn, a retired teacher and devoted father, was a remarkable person who never stopped teaching his family about the many wonders of the world. Carlton himself was one of those wonders. Just 9 days shy of his 93rd birthday, he became the Nation's oldest organ donor. Carlton's wife and children made the decision to donate Carlton's liver following his death from a brain hemorrhage.

Thanks to this gift, a 69-year-old woman suffering from end-stage liver disease is alive and is progressing well. And in his final and perhaps most valuable lesson of all, Carlton illustrated that age is no barrier to sharing life.

Carlton's story is courtesy of LifeGift, Houston, TX.

How old can you be and still donate the gift of life?

Before you answer, ask yourself this:

How old can you be and still care about others?
At what age do you stop making a difference?

The truth is, love and caring are ageless. Just as ageless as your ability to register as an organ, eye, and tissue donor.

Today, *people of all ages* can sign up to be donors. People in their 50s … 60s … 70s … and beyond. People over 50 can *receive* transplants as well.

People of all ages **can sign up to be donors. In their 50s … 60s … 70s … and beyond. People over 50 can *receive* transplants as well.**

Surprising? It makes sense. More people today are living healthier lives, and know about the importance of living and eating well and exercising. That means we're in better shape than ever—and able to be donors *and* recipients longer than anyone might have imagined.

In addition, medical research and technical advancements have made transplants more successful for all. So the number of people eligible for a transplant—and the age of those eligible to donate—continues to grow.

Have you said "yes" to donation? Any time is the right time to sign up. Right now is the perfect time! Just go to **organdonor.gov** to register in your state. The need is great, and donation is a beautiful way to pass life forward.

Bobby Height, Sr.

Bobby Height, Sr. has always been an active guy. He played basketball and baseball in school, and was drafted by the New York Yankees. When his career ended with a knee injury, Bobby taught physical education, coached, and played softball—becoming a member of the Amateur Softball Association of America's National Softball Hall of Fame.

In 2003, Bobby was diagnosed with an "unhealthy heart." Four years later, he learned that he needed a transplant. After a nerve-wracking wait, Bobby finally received "the call"—a heart was available. Now he's living a healthy life as a husband, father, and grandfather and campaigns for organ donation. "Someone said 'yes' to donating life so that I might have a second chance," says Bobby. "You, too, have the power to DONATE LIFE … PASS IT ON!"

Bobby's story is courtesy of LifeShare Of The Carolinas, Charlotte, NC.

The truth about donation.

Truth: People of any age, even those with certain chronic medical conditions, may be organ, eye, or tissue donors.

Truth: People who are registered as organ donors receive the same patient care in hospitals as non-donors. Care doesn't change if staff know you're a donor. Doctors work to save the lives of all, equally.

Just the facts:
People who are registered as organ donors receive the same medical care in hospitals as non-donors. Care doesn't change if staff know you're a donor.

Truth: The medical staff trying to save lives is completely separate from the transplant team. Every effort is made to save lives before donation is considered. Donation takes place only after the patient's death.

Truth: Most major religions in the United States support the gift of life as an act of charitable giving and do not prohibit organ and tissue donation.

Truth: Organ donation won't interfere with having an open-casket funeral. Organs are removed surgically with the same respect and dignity as in other surgical operations.

Truth: The estate or family of organ, eye, or tissue donors incurs absolutely no cost for donation.

Ernest Goh

He Saved Five Lives in His 60s

Ernest Goh was a person who loved life. "My husband always said that life is a journey and that we must enjoy the trip," said his wife Bernice. He also was committed to being an organ donor—and told his family how much he believed in it. "He put the pink dot on his driver's license himself," remembers Bernice. "He said that when we pass away, we must put all of our assets to good use."

When Ernest died unexpectedly at 61, his family knew what to do. It was a difficult time, Bernice says, "but I am very proud of him for making the decision. With his donation, five lives have been saved. He did a great thing."

Ernest's story is courtesy of OneLegacy, Los Angeles, CA.

Why your decision matters so much.

Organ, eye, and tissue donation are the greatest gifts anyone, of any age, can give. Here are just a few reasons why:

- There is a tremendous need. In April, 2012, more than 114,000 people were on the national waiting list for an organ transplant. Each week, more than 100 of them will not receive an organ in time to save their lives.

- *Over 99 million individuals in the United States are aged 50 and over.* If the majority of people in this age group signed up, imagine how many more lives could be saved!

- Today, the heart, liver, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, and small intestine can all be transplanted into individuals whose own organs are failing.

- Tissue donors can improve the lives of many more people by donating corneas, heart valves, veins, tendons, bone, and skin.

- *Your age doesn't make you ineligible to sign up*, nor do you have to be in perfect health. Your ability to donate is determined at the time of death.

- Research shows that organs from older donors can be used effectively to save lives.

- Knowing that lives have been saved by a loved one's donation has helped many donor families deal with their grief.

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Janet Ocasio

Any Age, Any Ethnic Group: You Are Needed.

Janet Ocasio received a life-saving liver transplant while in her 50s. Grateful to her donor, Janet now volunteers for an organ procurement organization in New York City and is a member of Transplants Save Lives, a group that serves recipients, candidates, and their families.

Janet sees a need for the Latino community to be better represented among donors. "If Hispanics learned what the needs are and what is possible, they would respond," she says, "because that is what we do in our community. The need for transplantation can affect anyone—young, old, male, and female in any ethnic or cultural group. Many, many Hispanics, like me, are living testaments that organ donation saves lives."

Janet's story is courtesy of the New York Organ Donor Network, New York, NY.

Every ethnicity, every age: your help is needed.

People of all ages and ethnicities can make a difference and save lives by donating their organs, eyes, and tissues. Signing up to be a donor is saying "yes" to life.

Organ, eye, and tissue transplants are needed by people in every corner of America. Infants to grandparents—people of all ages and from every racial and ethnic background—are on the national transplant waiting list.

Two-thirds of the individuals waiting for an organ transplant in 2011 were 50 years old or older. That year 2,242 deceased donors and 1,619 living donors were between 50–64 years of age and 595 deceased donors and 96 living donors were 65 or older.

While a recipient and donor may not be of the same ethnicity or race, and people of different heritages often match one another, it is important that an organ donor and recipient have matching blood types—and certain blood types are more common within some ethnic groups.

Both Whites and non-Whites donate in proportion to their representation in the U.S. population, but the need for transplants in some groups is disproportionately high, most often due to a high rate of conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes, both of which can lead to the need for a transplant.

For example, 80 percent of individuals on the national waiting list for an organ transplant are waiting for a kidney. Of those, almost 34 percent are African American.

Donors of every race and ethnicity are needed. More than 114,000 men, women, and children are waiting for an organ and have a better chance of receiving a transplant if there are more donors and more diversity among donors.

Anne Laumer

So Many Ways to Do Good and Change Lives.

Shortly after her 32nd wedding anniversary, 53-year-old Anne Laumer collapsed from a brain aneurysm. As her family waited in the hospital, they overheard another family decide to donate the organs of their child who had just died. Anne's family made the same decision, as a meaningful way to realize some good from a tragedy.

Anne's kidneys, liver, and heart helped four people to lead better lives, while her eyes improved the vision of four more. Countless others will benefit from the research enabled by her other donated organs. A year later, Anne's widower Ronald met Ruth Lovegren, who had also donated her spouse's organs and eyes. Ronald and Ruth, now married, volunteer on behalf of the Donate Life mission.

Anne's story is courtesy of LifeSource, Minneapolis, MN.

Simple steps to changing lives.

How do you sign up to become an organ, eye, and tissue donor? Follow these three steps to designate your wishes.

1. **Go online to organdonor.gov**. Click on "Sign up to be an organ donor." Choose your state from the drop down menu to find specific information on how to register to be an organ donor. Requirements differ for each state, so it's important to make sure you follow the instructions carefully.

2. **Designate on your driver's license.** You can also designate your decision on your driver's license when you obtain or renew your license (or photo I.D.). In many states doing this will place you on the donor registry.

3. **Tell your family.** Be sure to tell your family members so they can support your wishes when the time comes.

You can make a difference today. Registering to be an organ, eye, and tissue donor is one of the finest and most unselfish humanitarian actions you can take. Why not take time now to declare your wish to give the gift of life?

NOTES:

Learn more about organ, eye, and tissue donation by visiting organdonor.gov

organdonor.gov

1.866.99DONATE (1.866.993.6628)

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