

## How to Become a Donor

You can express your wishes to become an organ and tissue donor by registering your consent to donate and talking to your loved ones. It is critical to share your decision with your family, as they will be asked for final consent to donate your organs after your death. Register your consent to donate and discuss your intentions with your family so they can understand, support and respect your wishes in the future.

## “...IF NOT NOW, WHEN?”

- Hillel in the Talmud (Avot 1:14)

Say “Yes” to organ and tissue donation today by:

- Visiting your local Service Ontario Health Card Services – OHIP office or outreach site.
- Or, downloading and completing Gift of Life Consent Form available at [giftoflife.on.ca](http://giftoflife.on.ca), [health.gov.on.ca](http://health.gov.on.ca), or at [HealthyOntario.com](http://HealthyOntario.com)

Even if you have signed a donor card, you still need to register your consent through one of these two methods to ensure that your decision to donate is known and respected.

## Trillium Gift of Life Network

Trillium Gift of Life Network is dedicated to planning, promoting, coordinating and supporting organ and tissue donation across Ontario and improving the system so that more lives can be saved. It was created in December 2000 by the Ontario Government's *Trillium Gift of Life Network Act* – legislation designed to significantly increase organ and tissue donation in Ontario.

For more information, or to volunteer, contact:

Trillium Gift of Life Network  
522 University Avenue, Suite 900  
Toronto, ON M5G 1W7  
1.800.263.2833



Visit our website at: [www.giftoflife.on.ca](http://www.giftoflife.on.ca)

## Toronto Board of Rabbis

As Toronto's Jewish community rapidly approaches the 200,000 mark – the challenges and opportunities facing the community are greater than ever before, and the Toronto Board of Rabbis is uniquely suited to this needed leadership as Ontario's oldest and only multi-denominational rabbinic organization. The members of the Toronto Board of Rabbis lead in our synagogues, educate in our schools, comfort the ill in our hospitals, and guide our community in happy and challenging times. As Toronto's Jewish community grows, the Board is dedicated to ensuring that our Jewish values grow along with it.

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# Organ Donation

- it's a mitzvah



Toronto Board of Rabbis

Every 3 days someone dies waiting for an organ transplant. *Please register your consent to donate and talk to your family today.*





The value of human life is a cardinal value in Jewish Law. This is a value which is expressed through the obligation for self-preservation, but also in the duty to save the life of another human being. This obligation is a mitzvah, a commandment, of such a supreme value that it takes precedence over virtually all other religious duties. Therefore we are taught that the sick must eat on the fast day of Yom Kippur; the injured are treated on the Sabbath, etc.

Beginning with breakthroughs in organ transplantation in the 1950's, leading rabbinic authorities throughout the Jewish world have looked upon this new technology as a way to fulfill this *mitzvah*. We believe in the Divine mandate to save life – an obligation first expressed in the Torah itself: *“You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor.”* We see organ donation as a new means to fulfill an ancient, eternal religious duty. This idea also includes the giving of blood, bone marrow transplants, and donating redundant organs.

The Toronto Board of Rabbis affirms this principle in unambiguous terms, because no one should see the preservation of human life as optional – for Jews, it is obligatory. The Toronto Board of Rabbis urges that consent be given for post-mortem organ donation when requested by doctors and hospitals for use when directly needed for life-saving transplantation procedures. This applies to the individual in anticipation of his or her own death, as well as to health care proxies or next of kin whenever they are legally empowered to make such decisions on behalf of the deceased. It is our belief that by so doing, we render a profound and genuine honor to the deceased.

- The Toronto Board of Rabbis



## The Facts:

- Everyone is a potential donor – everyone.
- Donations from one individual can help many people
- Heart, liver, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, small bowel and stomach can be donated.
- One of the most important sources of organs for transplantation is living donors, who can donate kidneys and portions of their livers, typically to family members and close friends.
- Every 3 days someone in Ontario dies waiting for an organ transplant.
- The number of new patients added to the transplant waiting list grows each year, while the number of deceased donors remains unchanged.

## FAQ

### Q: Do all movements within Judaism agree with organ donation?

A: Yes. The value of pikuach nefesh (the saving of life) which is at the core of organ donation is a principle shared by the entire community, regardless of denominational affiliation.

### Q: Doesn't Judaism require us to be buried with our bodies intact?

A: Judaism clearly draws a distinction in the case of donating organs and tissues in order to save a life. The saving of a life is the most important of human activities. This is an overriding principle.

### Q: What about age?

A: Everyone is a potential organ and tissue donor, regardless of their age. Age is less important than the health of the organs and tissue. The oldest Canadian organ donor to date was over 90 years of age while the oldest tissue donor was 102.

### Q: Will my family have to pay?

A: No. The donor's family neither pays for, nor receives payment for organ and tissue donation. All costs related to donation are paid for by the organ procurement program or transplant centre. Hospital expenses incurred before the donation of organs and funeral expenses remain the responsibility of the donor's family.

### Q: If I have indicated my decision for organ donation, will everything be done to save my life?

A: Yes. There are strict legal guidelines that must be carefully followed before death is declared and organs can be removed. The doctors who treat a patient at the time of death are separate and distinct from those responsible for organ removal. Organ donation is considered only after every effort has been made to save a patient's life.

### Q: If I have cancer or another serious illness, can I still be an organ and tissue donor?

A: Even an individual with a serious illness can sometimes be an organ or tissue donor. If you have a concern, talk it over with your doctor. Ultimately the ability to become an organ and tissue donor depends on several factors, including the health of the organs and tissue at the time of death.

**“You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor.”**

*Leviticus 19:16*

**“Anyone who is able to save a life, but fails to do so, violates this mitzvah.”**

*Maimonides 1135-1204*

**“Every day that passes, people are left wondering if they will have another day of life as they desperately await the news of an organ that could save their life. This is a crisis not only for them, but for their families – spouses, parents, children and communities. The gift of life, in the form of organ donation, is truly a gift of love, as well.”**

*Toronto Board of Rabbis*