

ובחרת

...בחיים

"You Shall Choose Life"

-Deuteronomy 30:19



Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donation

A CONSERVATIVE JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

LiveOnNY

Caring for New Yorkers
through organ donation



All denominations of Judaism agree that the supreme Jewish value, and greatest *mitzvah*, is saving a life. *Pikuach Nefesh* (saving a life) is such a sacred principle that it takes precedence over almost every other religious act or consideration. Because a single organ donor can save up to eight lives, and one tissue donor can save or enhance the lives of up to 75 people, Judaism views organ and tissue donation as a sacred act of *Pikuach Nefesh* which overrides ALL other religious concerns, including body integrity and expedient burial.

Nearly 20 years ago, the Conservative movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards ruled that post-mortem donation of organs is permissible as a "new means to fulfill an ancient, eternal religious duty, a *mitzvah* of the highest order," namely saving life.

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

The Jewish value of *Kevod Meit* (honoring the deceased) generally requires the body to be buried intact. However, because organ and tissue donation is a dignified medical procedure that saves multiple lives, Rabbi Elliot Dorff writes "saving a person's life is so sacred a value in Judaism that if a person's organ can be used to save someone else's life, it is actually an honor to the deceased."

Does organ or tissue donation interfere with Jewish funeral or burial rites?

No. An organ donor can be buried in a Jewish cemetery with any/all traditional funeral and burial rituals, including *Tahara* (ritual washing).

Will doctors try to save my life even if they see that I am an organ donor?

Absolutely. Organ donation is only given consideration after ALL attempts to save the life of a patient have failed, and only after death has been declared by a physician not affiliated with the donation.

What parts of the body can be donated?

Lives can be saved through the donation of organs (heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas & intestines). A donor can also save or enhance lives with the gift of corneas, bone, skin grafts (for burn victims), heart valves, and blood vessels that can be transplanted.

“Saving a single life is the equivalent of saving an entire world.”

- Jer. Talmud Sanhedrin 4:1

“It is not merely permissible for a Jew to bequeath organs for transplantation following death, it is a mitzvah to do so, in order to save one life, or several lives.”



*-Rabbi David Golinkin,
Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem*

ORGAN DONATION FACTS

- ▶ Approximately 100,000 people across the country are waiting for lifesaving transplants.
- ▶ One New Yorker dies everyday waiting for a lifesaving transplant.
- ▶ Organ recipients are determined by computer algorithm; the process is not influenced by gender, ethnicity or religion.
- ▶ A donor family may direct their gift directly to a family member or friend on the waiting list for an organ.
- ▶ Anyone can be a potential donor, regardless of age, race or medical history.
- ▶ All costs associated with donation are covered by LiveOnNY.



**1 organ donor can save up to 8 lives and
heal up to 75 lives through tissue donation**

For more information, contact:

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