



Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donation

A REFORM JUDAISM 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 of this, the lifesaving act of organ, eye, and tissue donation is viewed as a sacred act and overrides all other religious considerations such as body integrity and expedient burial.

Q. What does Reform Judaism say about organ and tissue donation?

A. The Reform movement has been a strong supporter of organ & tissue donation for more than 50 years. In 1996 the Union for Reform Judaism initiated the “Matan Chaim: Gift of Life” program to promote organ donation and to encourages its members to participate in this great mitzvah.

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

A. The Jewish value of *Kevod Meit* (honoring the deceased) generally requires the body to be buried intact. However, because organ and tissue recovery is a dignified medical procedure that saves multiple lives, the sacred act of donation brings honor to the deceased and enhances his or her legacy.

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

A. No. An organ donor can be buried in a Jewish cemetery with any/all traditional funeral and burial rituals.



**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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“*Organ donation is a matter of life and death... Reform Judaism’s devotion to **pikuach nefesh** (saving a life) and our conviction that ‘You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor’ (Leviticus 19:16) compel us to support and encourage organ donation.***”**

-Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

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.
- ▶ Donation is only considered after all efforts to save the patient’s life have failed.
- ▶ There is no age limit to be an organ donor.
- ▶ There is no financial cost associated with donation.