

Saskatchewan Organ and Tissue Donor Registry Frequently Asked Questions

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Registration Questions

Q: What is the Saskatchewan Organ and Tissue Donor Registry?

A: The Organ and Tissue Donor Registry is an online registry for Saskatchewan residents to register their intentions to donate their organs and/or tissues for transplantation after they die. Residents will state whether or not they would like to register and what organs/tissues they would like to register.

Q: How do I register my intent to donate my organs and tissues?

A: Registering your decision for organ and/or tissue donation is easy – all you need is your Saskatchewan Health Services Card number, full name and date of birth. Saskatchewan residents can go to www.givelifesask.ca to register your intent to donate or to update your existing registration. You must click the yellow “Register or Modify my Decision” button on the right hand side of the website to start. Follow the steps in the online registry to register your decision.

Q: What information do I have to provide to register my decision?

A: In order to register, you must have an active Saskatchewan health card. You will be required to enter your Saskatchewan health card number, your full first and last name as well as your date of birth as part of the registration process.

Q: What if I have one single name and not a first and last name?

A: In some cases, residents may only have a single name, not a separate first name and last name. (e.g. “Cher”). In order to register both the first and last name fields must be filled in. If this applies to you, please enter your name into both the first and last name fields when registering.

Q: Why is it important to register my decision?

A: In Saskatchewan and across Canada, the need for organ and tissue for transplants far outweighs the available supply. Registering as a donor is the best way to make your decision known to health care providers. It is important to register, even if you have a sticker on your health card, to ensure the information is recorded in a safe, reliable place. When needed, the Saskatchewan Donation Program will use the latest record to confirm whether or not you have indicated you want to be a donor. They will reaffirm your decision with your family, which is why it is important to also talk to your family about your wishes.

Q: I have a sticker on my health card. Do I need to register online?

A: Donor stickers are not tracked and are no longer being provided by eHealth Saskatchewan. The best way to make your wishes known to health care providers is to register in the online registry, then to communicate your wishes to your family. Registering through the donor registry ensures your decision will be made available to health care providers and reinforced with your family.

Q: What happens if I change my mind after I register?

A: If you change your mind, you can update or withdraw your registration at any time by going to the Organ and Tissue Donor Registry and following the same process as when you registered for the first time.

Q: How do I register if I live outside of Saskatchewan?

A: If you hold a valid Saskatchewan Health Services Number, and are temporarily living outside the province, you can register the same way through the Organ and Tissue Donor Registry online or by filling out a paper form.

Q: Where do I go if I need help registering?

A: Please contact eHealth Saskatchewan at 1-844-767-8259 (Monday to Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.) or donorregistrysupport@ehealthsask.ca.

Organ Donation Questions

Q: What do I need to do to become an organ and/or tissue donor?

A: If you want to become an organ and/or tissue donor:

- Talk to your family about your wishes to be an organ and/or tissue donor and tell them exactly what you want to happen when you die.
- If you are over 16 years of age or older and have a valid Saskatchewan Health Services Card, you can register your intent to become an organ and tissue donor by visiting the Saskatchewan Organ and Tissue Donor Registry, and registering your choices about organ and/or tissue donation.
- Contact the [Saskatchewan Health Authority Living Donation Program](#) in your area if you want to be a living donor (living donors can donate a kidney or part of the lung or liver, or tissue such as bone marrow or stem cells).

Q: Can I choose which organs or tissues I would like to donate?

A: Yes. You can choose to donate all of your organs to help as many people as possible, or you can choose specifically which organs and/or tissues you would like to donate. The choice is yours to make and the options are outlined in the registry.

Q: Are there other ways to donate?

A: Some people may be interested in becoming a living donor (where a non-vital organ or part of an organ is donated to another person while they are alive) or donating their body to medical education or scientific research. To become a living donor, contact the [Saskatchewan Health Authority Living Donation Program](#) in your area. Living donors can donate a kidney or part of the lung or liver, or tissue such as bone marrow or stem cells.

Persons wishing to donate their whole body to science and medical education must complete a separate process to provide consent. Interested individuals should contact the [Body Bequeathal Program](#) of the Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology in the College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Health Authority is not involved in this process. If you would like to donate your whole body, you will not be eligible to donate for transplant.

Q: Does my age, ethnicity, pre-existing medical condition or sexual orientation prevent me from being a donor?

A: Everyone over the age of 16 can register to be a donor regardless of age, ethnicity, medical condition or sexual orientation. Your decision to register should not be based on whether you think you would be eligible or not. A donor's eligibility is determined by the health care team upon their death. In reality there are very few medical reasons that would preclude an individual from being a donor.

Q: If I have indicated my intent to be an organ and tissue donor, will medical staff still do everything possible to save my life?

A: Yes. The first and foremost concern for healthcare professionals caring for critically ill patients is to do everything possible to save lives. The possibility of donation is only considered after all lifesaving efforts have failed.

Q: When does organ and tissue donation become an option?

A: The possibility of donation is only considered after all life-saving efforts have failed. After your death, if it is determined that you are suitable to be a donor, a donor coordinator will contact your family to discuss with them the opportunity to donate. Having your wishes readily accessible to donor coordinators will help the donation staff in the discussion with your family.

Q: What impact does organ and tissue donation have on funeral plans?

A: Organ donation does not interfere with having an open casket funeral service. Surgery is performed to retrieve the organs and/or tissues with the same level of care that a complex surgery on a living patient would be performed.

Q: If I have given consent, do I need to talk to my family about my decision?

A: After you register, be sure to talk with your family (or whoever would be considered your next-of-kin), so they understand your decision. Families are more likely to agree to donation if they are aware of a family member's wishes. In Saskatchewan, even if you have registered your consent, your family still can indicate their objection to donate. However, in almost all cases, families respect and honour their loved one's known wishes.

Q: If I have given consent, will my family still be asked about donation?

A: Yes. A donor coordinator will speak to your family about donation. The decision to donate is a personal choice. Registering on the Organ and Tissue Donor Registry and sharing your wishes, via the registry, is one way to start a conversation with your family/next of kin. To help start the discussion with your family and others, you will be asked if you want to share your decision on social media after registering.

Q: Where can I go if I have more questions about organ and tissue donation?

A: Learn more about [the organ and tissue donation process](#) in Saskatchewan and [the Saskatchewan Transplant Program](#), which facilitates the pre- and post-transplant care of organ recipients in Saskatchewan. The program also coordinates donations by living donors of a kidney, a portion of a liver and some other organs and tissues.

Data and Privacy Questions

Q: Is the information in the registry confidential?

A: Yes. The information entered into the registry will be kept in a secure database by eHealth Saskatchewan. The Ministry of Health will keep this information confidential unless disclosure is permitted or required by law.

Q: How will my information be used? Who will access it?

A: The information provided in the registry will be used to confirm your decision to become an organ and/or tissue donor. It will only be accessed by specified healthcare providers from the Saskatchewan Health Authority when donation becomes an option. Your registration will then be shared with your family when they are asked about donation.