

Step 1:

Think About Organ Donation

Most of us don't know when we're going to die and it could happen suddenly and unexpectedly.

Thinking now about whether you would want to be a donor, or not, and having a conversation with your family/whānau, will mean that in the event of your death, they will know what to do.

Most of us can donate tissues after death; these include eyes, heart valves and skin. This is because tissue donation is possible in most circumstances when people die, for example at home, in a hospice or in a hospital.

On the other hand, to be an organ donor you will be in an intensive care unit, on a breathing machine and likely to have serious brain damage.

This is why only a few people can donate organs (heart, lungs, pancreas, liver and kidneys).

Organ transplants can be life saving for heart, lung and liver recipients, while kidney and pancreas transplants dramatically improve quality of life.

Tissue transplants include heart valves to save the lives of babies and young children, skin to treat people with severe burns and eye tissue (cornea and sclerae) to restore sight and repair eyes.

In this way, one donor can transform the lives of up to ten people.

Questions to think about:

What would you like to know about organ and tissue donation?

Visit the Organ Donation New Zealand website www.donor.co.nz for more information on which organs and tissues you can donate. This includes details on the donation process and answers to frequently asked questions such as "am I too old to donate?"

In the event of your death, would you want to be an organ or tissue donor?

If yes, what organs would you donate?

If yes, what tissues would you donate?



Step 1: (cont.)

What happens?

People of all ages can be considered for organ and tissue donation.

All organs and tissues will be assessed for suitability at the time of donation.

If you are in a situation where donation is possible, a health professional will have a discussion with your family/whānau. They will ask your family/whānau for their agreement to donate, and if yes, which organs and tissues they would give their consent for. This is why it is important to have a conversation about your wishes beforehand, so your family are prepared.

After your family/whānau has agreed to donation, your organs are removed respectfully using normal operating procedures.

Your family/whānau will be supported during and after this process by Organ Donation NZ Donor Coordinators.

Organ and tissue donation will not interfere with your funeral arrangements, such as having an open casket, or being at home or on a marae.

Following donation the Donor Coordinators can give your family/whānau brief details about the people you have helped, if they wish to receive this information.

Next steps

Discuss your thoughts about donation with your family members or whānau. Help them understand what you would want. For ideas on how to do this see **Step 2 Discuss and Decide**.

Remember that if you do not want to be an organ or tissue donor, it is still important to have a conversation with your family/whānau and let them know your wishes.

Who will you talk to? What will you say?
