

Donate an organ, gift a life!

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# Donate an organ, gift a life!

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Mrs. DN, a 33-year old female, developed kidney failure in 2010. She was started on dialysis, which she had to do thrice a week. There was no suitable donor in the family and so she had to continue dialysis. In 2017, on the suggestion of a friend, she registered for deceased (cadaver) donor transplant in Mumbai. [Read More](#)



Mrs. DN, a 33-year old female, developed kidney failure in 2010. She was started on dialysis, which she had to do thrice a week. There was no suitable donor in the family and so she had to continue dialysis. In 2017, on the suggestion of a friend, she registered for deceased (cadaver) donor transplant in Mumbai.

In July 2020, soon after the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, she received a call for a cadaver donor transplant. She underwent the transplant on July 18, 2020; and is doing well ever since.

Like DN, there are millions of people suffering from kidney failure. Similarly, there are many people suffering from liver failure, heart failure and lung failure. While those with kidney failure can survive on dialysis (an inferior option compared to transplant), for those with liver, heart and lung failure, transplant is the only hope for survival.

Unfortunately, a very small percentage of patients needing transplant, actually get transplanted. The table below shows the number of patients registered with the Zonal Transplant Coordination Center (ZTCC) Mumbai, the number of patients on the waitlist and the number of patients transplanted.

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ORGAN	TOTAL NO. OF REGISTERED PATIENTS	TOTAL CURRENT NO. OF PATIENTS ON WAITING LIST	TOTAL NO. OF TRANSPLANTS DONE
KIDNEY	11,091	3367	951
LIVER	4504	383	440
HEART	401	44	179
LUNG	145	35	34

One can see from the table that for kidney and liver, not even 10% of the registered patients are lucky enough to get transplanted. This means, that the majority die waiting for a transplant. For heart and lung, not many patients register because many die before they can be registered.

### Why such a wide gap between the need and the availability of organs?

The wide gap is due to several reasons; but most importantly, it is due to the lack of awareness about signing an organ donor card, which means pledging your organs after death.

Donating organs after death is a service to humanity which is done without spending anything. One donor can donate kidneys (2), a liver, lungs (2), a heart, pancreas, and intestines.

With advances in medical science, now even the hands and the face can be donated. Recently a hand transplant (for both hands) was performed at a hospital in Mumbai.

Thus, one donor can save many lives and improve the quality of life for 58 people, by donating tissues.

Tissues that can be donated include cornea, skin, ligaments, tendons, bone and heart valves, among others.

Unfortunately, organ donation does not happen as it should in our country; and many people with end stage organ failure, die. Many needing tissues do not get them in our country, either.

The donation rate is < 1 per million in our country while it is close to 50 per million in Spain.

Besides, low awareness and deep-rooted misconceptions about organ donation (due to socio-cultural beliefs and negative media reports) also serve as huge deterrents.

### How to pledge to donate organs?

Pledging to donate is extremely simple. All that one needs to do is, to sign an organ donor card.

To get a donor card, simply visit:

[www.notto.gov.in](https://notto.gov.in) (https://notto.gov.in/) or

[www.narmadakidney.org](http://www.narmadakidney.org/) (http://www.narmadakidney.org/) or

[www.ztccmumbai.org](http://www.ztccmumbai.org) (<http://www.ztccmumbai.org/>) or [Life-Style](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Life-Style) (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Life-Style>) Relationship (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Life-Style>)

[www.mohanfoundation.org](https://www.mohanfoundation.org) (<https://www.mohanfoundation.org/>) 194 PTS

and download the card.

Keep the signed donor card in your wallet / purse along with other ID cards, at all times

You do not need to register anywhere.

If all of us were to keep a signed donor card on us at all times, we would soon conquer the need for organs and would have no one waiting for a second lease of life.

### Can a living person donate?

Yes.

A healthy person can donate one of the 2 kidneys or a part of the liver. As per transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994, the donor must be closely related (sibling, parent, grandparent, or spouse). See how Amey Kesarkar's life transformed after a transplant.

An emotionally related donor can also donate, if the Authorization Committee (which grants permissions for transplants), is convinced of no commercial transaction between the donor and the recipient.

*This article is contributed by Dr. Bharat V. Shah - Gen. Secretary, ZTCC, Mumbai, Managing Trustee, Narmada Kidney Foundation; Director, Institute of Renal Sciences, Global Hospital, Mumbai; Consultant Nephrologist, Reliance Foundation Hospital; President, Indian Society of Nephrology (West Zone)*

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