

# Media Advisory

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## Seven of the Most Common Myths about Organ Donation Debunked

TORONTO, April 24, 2017 – This National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week (April 23 – 29, 2017), Trillium Gift of Life Network is debunking myths about organ and tissue donation and encouraging Ontarians to register consent for donation.

Registration has the power to save lives and it gives hope to the over 1,500 people in Ontario waiting for a lifesaving transplant today. The reality is that every three days someone will die because of not getting an organ transplant in time. But you can help. With more registered donors, we could prevent deaths on the waitlist.

To break down barriers and promote donor registration, Trillium Gift of Life Network has debunked seven of the most common myths about organ and tissue donation.

**MYTH: A signed donor card is all you need to become a donor.**

**FACT:** Because paper donor cards were a less than ideal way to record a donor's consent, Trillium Gift of Life Network began recording consent in a Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care database. This ensures that a person's wishes about donation can be shared with loved ones at the appropriate time. Formally register at [www.BeADonor.ca](http://www.BeADonor.ca).

**MYTH: I am too old, no one would want my organs or tissues.**

**FACT:** Age alone does not disqualify someone from becoming a donor. The oldest organ donor in Canada was over 90 and the oldest tissue donor was over 100. There is always potential to be a donor; age should not prevent someone from registering.

**MYTH: I cannot be a donor because I have a serious medical condition.**

**FACT:** All potential donors are assessed at time of death for medical suitability, which includes a review of their health history as well as serological testing. It is best not to rule yourself out because there is always potential to save or enhance the lives of others through organ and tissue donation.

**MYTH: My religion will not allow for organ donation.**

**FACT:** All major religions support organ and tissue donation or respect an individual's choice. However, if you are unsure of your faith's position on donation, consult with your faith leader.

**MYTH: Organ donation will delay and impact my funeral plans.**

**FACT:** Organ and tissue donation will not delay or interfere with funeral plans. Medical suitability testing and a recovery surgery typically take place within 24 to 36 hours of someone's passing. After donation, the family can carry out funeral arrangements as planned, including an open casket funeral, burial, cremation, and so on.

**MYTH: Families have to pay for the cost of organ donation.**

**FACT:** Donation does not come at a cost to the family. Organ and tissue donation is a gift. The costs of organ and tissue donation and transplantation in Ontario are covered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

**MYTH: I cannot donate blood, so I cannot be an organ donor.**

**FACT:** The regulations for blood donation are different for organ and tissue donation. Even if you are not able to donate blood, you can still become an organ and tissue donor.

Register today at [www.BeADonor.ca](http://www.BeADonor.ca) or learn more about these myths and find answers to other questions at <http://www.giftoflife.on.ca/en/faq.htm>.

**Did you know?**

- National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In recognition of this milestone, landmarks will be lit green to raise awareness for organ and tissue donation - including the CN Tower, Toronto City Hall and the 3D Toronto sign.
- According to an Ipsos study, as many as 1.8 million Ontarians mistakenly believe they are registered organ and tissue donors. Paper donor cards became obsolete when Trillium Gift of Life Network adopted a registry. Check your status or register your consent at [www.BeADonor.ca](http://www.BeADonor.ca).

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*Trillium Gift of Life Network is a not-for-profit agency of the Government of Ontario responsible for planning, promoting, coordinating and supporting organ and tissue donation for transplantation across Ontario and improving the system so that more lives can be saved.*