



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

To: Editors & Health Journalists  
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### **Organ and Tissue donation – a valuable gift of life**

**Pretoria:** The Department of Health urges the members of the public to embrace the gift of life through organ and tissue donation to improve someone's quality of life or even save someone's life, especially those who are very sick or dying from a life-threatening disease, or with organ failure. One donor can save up to 7 lives and transform over 50 lives.

Organ donation is when organs such as heart, lung, liver and kidney are removed from one person and transplanted into another person. On the other hand, tissue donation is when tissues in the body such as skin, corneas, bone are removed from one person and transplanted into another person.

It is estimated that over 2500 people are on the active waiting list of organ and tissue donation, while others lose their lives while waiting to receive a life-saving gift. Currently, organ donors are in very short supply because of limited knowledge amongst the citizens.

The Department of Health in collaboration with various non-governmental organisations will use the month of August as part of Organ and Tissue donation awareness month to intensify awareness and increase knowledge about the significance of donating organs and tissues.

Anyone aged 18 years or older can become an organ or tissue donor without expecting financial reward and subject themselves to certain medical conditions that require one to wait or be physically well. Although, one can donate organs such as kidney and liver lobe and continue to live a normal and healthy life because organs like the liver regenerate over time.

However, it is illegal in South Africa and other parts of the world for anyone to sell or trade human organs or tissues because that can perpetuate organ and human trafficking.

An organ transplant takes place in both government and private hospitals after an individual has been declared circulatory (heart stopped beating) or brain dead but is still being supported by artificial life support. The tissue donation and retrieval can still take place several hours and even days after death, but consent from the loved ones must be given.

Potential donors can go to their nearest public or private hospital to ask for assistance on the steps to follow for one to donate, alternatively call **Organ Donor Foundation** on 0800 22 66 11/ visit [www.odf.org.za](http://www.odf.org.za), OR **SA Bone Marrow Registry** on 021 447 8630, or **Centre for Tissue Engineering at Tshwane University of Technology** on 012 349 3500/ [www.tissuedonation.org.za](http://www.tissuedonation.org.za)

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