



OneLegacy Frequently Asked Questions

What is organ, eye and tissue donation?

Click [here](#) to download Donation facts.

What is the difference between organs and tissue?

Tissues are a group of cells that have a similar function. Examples of tissue include bone, corneas, veins, heart valves, and ligaments. An organ is composed of several types of specialized tissue working together to perform a function. Examples of organs include the heart, liver, kidneys, pancreas, and lungs.

How are donors and recipients matched?

Click [here](#) to download information on Matching Donors and Recipients.

How will my loved one's tissue be used?

One tissue donor can save or bring health and healing to more than seventy-five lives. Many tissues are dynamic in how they are able to be used for transplant, but some examples are provided below.

- The gift of cornea donation can help up to two people restore their vision.
- Whole heart donation for heart valves can aid in healing heart malformations.
- The gift of bone donation can help prevent amputation or paralysis for someone affected by bone disease.
- Skin donation can improve the quality of life for those needing reconstructive surgeries (such as mastectomy patients and injured military personnel).
- Ligaments and tendons can help someone to restore lost mobility.
- Vein tissue can be used in heart bypass surgery.

What medical expenses does OneLegacy cover?

OneLegacy covers all hospital expenses that pertain to the donation process following consent. This excludes costs incurred by the coroner or medical examiner and funeral expenses.

Can OneLegacy help with funeral expenses?

OneLegacy is legally unable to assist donor families with the cost of funerals and memorials.

Should my child attend the funeral/memorial service?

Many adults wonder if it is a good idea to include children at the funeral. While every family has its own traditions and beliefs, and these will play a strong role in funeral and memorial service planning and decisions, parents may not be aware that one of the most helpful things they can do for their children at this time is give them choices. It is a meaningful and important experience for children to have the opportunity to say goodbye to the person who died in a way that feels right to them. Saying goodbye is never easy, but it helps bring a sense of finality to the death that is helpful in the healing process.



What type of grief support services does OneLegacy provide?

OneLegacy Aftercare offers grief literature, individual and group support, telephone support, access to a Facebook group exclusively for donor families, follow-up letters, community support referrals, donor family gatherings, and events to help you continue to honor your loved one. Please call (800) 423-7220, email us at familycare@onelegacy.org or [click here](#) for more information.

It's been 6 weeks, why have I not received contact from Aftercare?

Families who have opted in to the Aftercare program should have received a letter in the mail by 6 weeks. If you have not received a letter or would like to opt in to the Aftercare program, please contact us by calling (800) 423-7220, or emailing us at familycare@onelegacy.org.

What is "normal grieving" and how do I know if I need help?

Everyone grieves in their own, unique way. It is not uncommon for one to experience a wide variety of physical and emotional reactions to loss. It is important to allow yourself to move through your grief at a pace that is appropriate for you. Grief is only considered abnormal when it is accompanied by thoughts of self-harm, suicide, harm to others, or if it begins to cause a severe lack of functioning in one's life. If you are in crisis or feel suicidal please contact the 24/7 hotline at 1-800-273-8255 or text "home" 741741 for support.

How long does grief last? How long will I feel like this?

It is widely believed that there is no time frame to adhere to when one is grieving. Additionally, everyone experiences grief in a unique, individual manner. While there may be no specific way to measure one's healing progress, it is important to keep in mind that your grief journey will take time and to give yourself permission to grieve at your own time and pace.

How do I cope with holidays, anniversaries, birthdays and special occasions?

Coping with the loss of a loved one at special times of the year can be particularly difficult. Ignoring the occasion will likely delay the emotions surrounding that time of year for another time. You may wish to keep some traditions that you practiced with your loved one, alter other traditions, and let go of the ones that no longer serve you or your loved ones. It is important to communicate with family and loved ones about your wishes and expectations.

Create online tribute to them. Please visit the Donate Life Memorial page and follow the instructions provided: donatelifememorial.blogspot.com

How can I volunteer and inspire others to donate?

[OneLegacy Ambassadors](#), our organization's official volunteer program, offers donor family members, transplant recipients and others who have been touched by donation or transplantation an opportunity to share their experiences and inspire our community to donate life.



How do I obtain an update on my loved one's donation?

Many donor families wonder how their loved one's organ recipients are doing months and years after the transplant or wish they knew how many people were helped with their loved one's tissue donation. If your loved one [donated tissue](#), such as corneas, heart valves, veins, skin and/or bone, we can request a tissue update if it has been over a year since their donation. If your loved one donated [organs](#), such as kidneys, pancreas, liver, lungs or heart, we can request a medical update on the recipients after 6 months.

Why were some of the organs/tissue that I consented to not used for transplant?

For organ donation, even with all the tests performed prior to the surgical recovery of the organs, the visualization and biopsy of organs during surgery are the final determinations as to whether the organs would be suitable for transplantation. Sometimes transplant surgeons from a number of transplant centers determined that organ function was compromised to the point that transplantation is not an option. For tissue donation, sometimes as we review all of the available information and tests results become available, OneLegacy and/or tissue banks make an assessment that the tissues may not be able to be used for transplantation purposes. The natural aging process, dietary habits, medical history, and the circumstances surrounding the disease or injury all play a part in these determinations.

How do I contact my loved one's recipients?

OneLegacy receives cards and letters from transplant recipients thanking their donor families for the precious gift of life. We assist in all correspondence between the donor families and recipients, and we maintain anonymity with all correspondence until both donor families and recipients are ready for direct contact. Some recipients choose to initiate contact with donor families by writing a letter or sending a card expressing their gratitude, while some donor families choose to initiate contact by constructing a letter addressed to all recipients. If you would like more information or feel ready to write a letter, you can do so [here](#).

****Please note that at this time we are only able to forward letters to whole organ recipients (i.e, recipients of heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, pancreas, and/or small intestine). We apologize that we are unable to forward letters to or arrange meetings with cornea or tissue recipients (bone, skin, heart valves, ligaments, cornea/eye, or veins) at this time due to privacy health laws.**

How is OneLegacy funded?

OneLegacy is a non-profit organ procurement organization (OPO), and is allowed to bill transplant centers a set acquisition fee for each organ provided for transplant. This fee covers the medical expenses and transportation costs related to the donation process. There is no charge for the donated organ itself. The acquisition fee becomes a part of the total amount the transplant center bills to the organ recipient or their insurance company. There are no fees charged to the donor family. OneLegacy also recovers costs related to the tissue donation process from the companies that process the tissues into useable grafts and products for surgery. Charges and expenses incurred by the OPOs are regulated and audited



by the U.S. Department of Health's Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Medicare generally covers the costs of kidney transplants under the End Stage Renal Disease Program (ESRD). Acquisition fees vary by organ and geographic area.

Why did OneLegacy contact me so quickly after my loved one's death?

Because tissues must be recovered within a few hours after death, you may have received a phone call shortly following your loved one's death.

What is brain death and has anyone ever recovered from it?

It is medically impossible for an individual to "wake up" or recover from brain death. Brain death is irreversible damage to the brain caused by trauma, which results in a cessation of independent respiration. Brain death is a medically, legally and morally accepted determination of death, and two independent, licensed physicians must make the diagnosis before the organ donation process can occur.

What is donation after circulatory death?

Donation after circulatory death is an option for families of patients who have a neurological injury and/or irreversible brain damage but do not meet the complete criteria for brain death. After a physician has determined that a patient has no chance for recovery and the family has decided to withdraw life support, the family is offered the option of donation after circulatory (or cardiac) death. This type of donation is very rare and accounts for about 13% of organ donors.

How can I make a monetary donation in honor of my loved one?

If you are interested in memorial contributions to the OneLegacy Foundation in memory of your loved one, please [click here](#).