

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why enroll now? I plan to live for a long time.

The health information that you provide now, while living, will support research now, and upon your death make your tissue donation much more valuable to future research.

How soon after death must the organs be recovered, and where will this be done?

The organs you would donate cannot be used for transplantation; therefore the time for their recovery can be slightly longer. We hope to recover the donated tissue within 24 hours, although the time frame may be longer in some circumstances. The organs will be recovered by medical professionals at the closest equipped VA hospital, or other facility if the VA is unavailable.

What if I already have my decision to donate written in my will?

By the time your will is read, it will be too late to recover your organ donation. Enrolling now and telling your family that you want to donate is the best way to ensure that your wishes are carried out.

Will my family have to pay anything if I decide to donate?

No, we pay for all costs related to your tissue donation, as well as transportation of your body to and from the site where the procedure is done. However, we cannot pay for the usual costs of the funeral, burial, or cremation.

After tissue donation, is an open casket viewing still possible?

Yes, the donated tissue will be recovered in a respectful manner that will not interfere with an open casket viewing.

What happens to the donated tissue?

Donated tissue is sent to a VA-approved facility for scientific study and storage. Researchers from around the world may request tissue samples to conduct approved research. These requests are reviewed by a committee of established scientists and approved if scientifically sound.

I don't know my religion's position on organ donation. What can I do?

Most religions support organ donation as a charitable act of giving. If this is a concern, you should consult your religious leader.

How will the information that you collect from me be protected?

All your information that we collect will be labeled with a code that does not identify you directly. Information collected by the VABBB will be kept confidential as required by law. The VABBB complies with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and its privacy regulations and all other applicable laws that protect your privacy.

I am listed as an organ donor on my driver's license. Does this automatically make me eligible for brain donation?

Being an organ donor via your license is a very generous and life-saving donation to the many people waiting for an organ transplant. However, this does not notify brain banks of your intention to donate your brain. A person intending to make a brain donation must sign up with a brain bank such as the VABBB before death. In cases where a person had wished to be a brain donor but was unable to sign up before death, family members may contact the brain bank to approve the donation as long as it is done immediately after death.

Who should I talk to about donating?

It is important that your family and doctor know your wishes. Talking with your family and your VA doctor about these issues now helps to reduce stress on your family at the time of your death. You or your family may change the decision about donating at any time. If you have more questions, or would like to enroll, please call us at our **toll-free number: (800)762-6609.**