Frequently asked questions about Organ Donation

1. **What is organ and tissue donation and transplantation?**
   Donation is a voluntary act where a live person, or the person’s family after death, authorizes the removal of organs and tissues for transplantation, in order to help others. Donation is selfless and altruistic because there is no remuneration or compensation for the donor or the donor’s family. Yet each organ and tissue donor can benefit more than 55 people.

Organ transplantation is a medical treatment where diseased organs, tissues and cells are replaced by a donor’s body parts. These procedures have excellent results in the quality of life of people, in addition to extending it.

2. **What organs and tissues are donated and transplanted in Colombia?**
   - **Organs:** heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, intestine, pancreas.
   - **Tissues:** corneas, skin, bone, bone marrow, blood vessels, heart valves, cartilage, tendons, sclera, amniotic membrane.

3. **What myths are there about organ and tissue donation?**
   Unscrupulous people around the world have created myths to generate confusion and fear on the subject. The most common are:
   - **The donor is disfigured**
     **NOT TRUE.** The donor’s body is not deformed at all. The procurement of organs and tissues is performed by specialists. Once the procedure ends, donors retain their original body form so that the body can be later released to the family.
   - **There is organ trafficking**
     **NOT TRUE.** Colombian Law 73 of 1988, Law 919 of 2004 and Decree 2493 of 2004
There is organ trafficking. The donor is disfigured. These same organizations are the only entities authorized to conduct the removal of organs and tissues for transplantation, in order to help others. Donation is selfless and altruistic because there is no remuneration or compensation for the donor or the donor's family.

Is there regulation for donation and transplantation in Colombia?

There is comprehensive regulation in Colombia of all aspects relating to the donation and transplantation of organs and tissues. An organ or tissue transplantation, if required, includes the following steps:

1. The fulfillment of the transplant procedure depends on there being a compatible donor and a waiting list for the required transplantation.
2. Every organ donation and transplantation process is monitored and controlled. Each procedure performed is monitored and controlled.
3. Transactions are conducted in compliance with the respective health authorities and by the National Institute of Health for data safety purposes. It is necessary that the organs be taken to a laboratory to ensure the viability of the organ.
4. The fulfillment of the transplant procedure depends on there being a compatible donor and a waiting list for the required transplantation.

What is organ and tissue donation and transplantation?

It is possible to artificially and temporarily maintain the organs with medicine and medical processes conducted?

Donated organs and tissues are allocated to people who are on the waiting list, ensuring equity of all organs.

4. Does organ donation and transplantation have a cost?

Kidney, liver, heart, cornea and bone marrow are included in the Mandatory Health Plan (POS) and therefore have no cost. Other transplants are also covered by the health system. It is available to people who need some treatment of organ and/or tissue transplantation regardless of sex, religion or economic status.

5. Why should I donate organs and/or tissues?

It is important to donate to save and improve the quality of life of other Colombians who need an organ and/or tissue transplantation, and can access the treatment regardless of sex, religion or economic status. Donation is an act of solidarity by society to society. No transplantation procedures can be conducted without donation.

6. Are transplants performed in all cities, and where are the donation processes conducted?

Only 26 clinics and hospitals in Colombia are enabled to perform transplant programs and registered with the Network to perform these procedures.

The list of institutions can be found at: www.ins.gov.co/lineas-de-accion/Red-Nacional-Laboratorios/Paginas/marco-Legal-documentos-tecnicos-y-estadisticas.aspx

These same organizations are the only entities authorized to conduct the removal of organs and tissues. They travel to the health care providers for such procedures where the donor is located.

• Religions do not accept organ and tissue donation

NOT TRUE. Many world religions, including Catholicism, are in favor of donating organs and tissues, and see it as an act of support and solidarity towards another human being.
7. Can I be a live donor?

Yes, some organs and tissues can be donated while people are still alive. For example, you can donate a pair organ, like a kidney, to a family member or relative, as long as they meet the requirements of current regulations. You can also donate tissue and bone marrow to a relative.

8. When is the donation of organs and tissues performed?

The donation procedure is performed when a person dies by brain death or cardiac arrest, and after requesting consent from the person’s family for organ donation. The only organs and tissues removed are those the family has specified in the acceptance form and those that are suitable for transplantation after verifying function after conducting different tests. It is therefore essential that live persons inform their family of their willingness to be a donor.

9. What conditions should a deceased person meet for the donation to be performed?

The donation of organs and tissues is applicable once death is diagnosed with neurological criteria (brain death). At this point a series of tests are made to the donor to determine organ and tissue viability.

In the case of death by cardiac arrest, only tissues can be removed.

10. What is brain death?

Brain death occurs when a person suffers a catastrophic brain injury caused by the complete and irreversible cessation of all brain activity, which is responsible for controlling the operation of all organs.

People who are brain dead are considered medically, ethical and legally as corpses.

It is possible to artificially and temporarily maintain the organs with medicine and medical equipment while assessment indicates the possibility that they may be donated.

11. Who can donate organs and tissues?

Everyone can be a donor.
Only when the person dies can it be determined whether he or she can become a donor, prior family consent for the donation.

Living donors can donate a pair organ or tissue, according to established clinical and legal
conditions. Organ donation has no age limit; in the case of minors, they can be donors with parental consent.

12. Is there regulation for donation and transplantation in Colombia?

There is comprehensive regulation in Colombia of all aspects relating to the donation and transplantation of body parts. The most important are Law 73 of 1988, Law 919 of 2004 and Decree 2493 of 2004. These regulations govern the processes for organ and tissue donation for transplantation from deceased and living persons, donation mechanisms, technical and scientific aspects and health measures in case of non-compliance.

13. What is the legal presumption of donation?

It is a mechanism for organ and tissue removal. In Colombia, if there is no objection to donation by the live person, or the family at the time of death, the donation of organs and tissues can proceed provided the time established to ensure quality of the body part has not elapsed, and there is no legal medical contraindication from the donor to remove them.

14. What is the Network of Donation and Transplantation?

The Network of Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation was created by the Ministry of Social Protection in 2004, under Decree 2493. It is an integration system of the Tissue and Marrow Banks, Healthcare Providers (IPS) enabled to provide Transplant or Implant programs, the National Institute of Health (INS), the Province and District Health Offices and other actors in the system. It seeks to coordinate activities related to the promotion, donation, removal, transplantation and implantation of organs and tissues, in order to make them accessible in terms of quality, timeliness and adequacy for the population, following the principles of cooperation, efficacy, efficiency, equity and solidarity.

15. How is the process to register in a waiting list?

1. A person with a chronic or acute illness and whose treatment can be a transplant must be referred by the treating specialist physician for pre-transplant evaluation to a Healthcare Provider (IPS), enabled in the transplant program.

2. After this referral, the Benefits Plans Management Company where the person is registered (Health Promotion Organization - EPS, or Province and District Health Office) must authorize the procedure at a Healthcare Provider (IPS), enabled in the required transplant program, according to what it is established in the pre-transplant study.

3. Once the pre-transplant study defines that the patient meets the clinical conditions to
undergo the procedure and the approval of the insurer has been secured, the patient enters a waiting list for the required transplantation.

4. The fulfillment of the transplant procedure depends on there being a compatible donor and for organ donation to be possible so it can be used for this purpose.

16. How are donated organs and tissues allocated?

Donated organs and tissues are allocated to people who are on the waiting list, ensuring equity in the allocation, without discrimination based on family background, socioeconomic status, gender, race, religion, among others, responding only to compliance with nationally defined technical and scientific criteria for this purpose. This activity is audited and controlled by government entities, ensuring transparency of the process.

17. Can I know the receiver of the donated organs?

The information related to the donor, receiver and the donation process is subject to reservation and is therefore confidential.

18. How I can be a donor?

Most importantly, tell your family about your willingness to be a donor so that at the time of your death your decision is informed and respected.

Also, you can express your willingness to be a donor by obtaining the Single National Donor Card in a virtual process with the National Institute of Health. Most importantly, talk about this with your family and have your willingness to be a donor respected, because eventually, they must give consent for donation.

19. How I can get a donor card?

You can get the card, which reports your will to donate at the National Institute of Health. You must register there and provide basic information such as your name, your phone number, your blood type, etc. Once you have entered this information you can download, save and print your card anytime.

20. What if I do not have access to Internet or email?

If you do not complete the email field, you can immediately download the card that identifies
you as a donor. If you do not have a computer available or do not have Internet access, you can contact the National Institute of Health by phone: 220-0925 in Bogota and 018000113400 for the rest of the country.

21. What should I do if I registered before 2014 and have no passcode to access the donation card register?

If you registered before 2014 you can request to receive your password via the card application, from where they will send you the password to your registered email. If you did not include an email when you signed up previously, you should contact the National Institute of Health for data safety purposes to the phone: 220-0925 in Bogota and 018000113400 for the rest of the country.

22. What should I do if I lost my donor card?

No problem. You can enter the National Institute for Health application anytime and download your card. If you do not have a computer available or do not have Internet access, you can contact the National Institute of Health by phone: 220-0925 in Bogota and 018000113400 for the rest of the country.

23. What should I do if I want to update my data?

You can update your profile information by logging in to your session in the “I’m a donor” and you will be asked your username and password to login.

24. What should I do if I want to change the donation will?

You must contact the National Institute of Health by phone: 220-0925 in Bogota and 018000113400 for the rest of the country.

25. What should I do if I also want to donate blood?

You can contact the National Institute of Health, on the www.ins.gov.co website or by phone 018000113400 to direct you to the nearest blood bank.

26. Where I can get more information?

Ministry of Health and Social Protection contacts
Website: www.minsalud.gov.co
What myths are there about organ and tissue donation?

- corneas, skin, bone, bone marrow, blood vessels, heart valves, cartilage, tendons,
- heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, intestine, pancreas.

What organs and tissues are donated and transplanted in Colombia?

Organ transplantation is a medical treatment where diseased organs, tissues and cells are exchanged for healthy ones.

What is organ and tissue donation and transplantation?

Donation is a voluntary act where a live person, or the person's family after death, authorizes the removal of organs and tissues. They travel to the health care providers for such procedures where the donor is requested to sign the donor card and after requesting consent from the person's family for organ donation. The only organs and tissues removed are those the family has specified in the acceptance form and those that are suitable for transplantation after verifying function after conducting different tests. It is therefore essential that live persons inform their family of their willingness to be a donor.

Who can donate organs and tissues?

Everyone can be a donor.

What conditions should a deceased person meet for the donation to be considered by the health authorities?

When is the donation of organs and tissues performed?

In the case of death by cardiac arrest, only tissues can be removed.

Living donors can donate a pair organ or tissue, according to established clinical and legal conditions. Organ donation has no age limit; in the case of minors, they can be donors with parental consent.

Can I be a live donor?

Yes, some organs and tissues can be donated while people are still alive. For example, you can donate a heart valve.

What if I do not have access to Internet or email?

You can contact the National Institute of Health by phone: 220-0925 in Bogotá and 018000113400.

Can I know the receiver of the donated organs?

The information related to the donor, receiver and the donation process is subject to reservation conditions. Organ donation has no age limit; in the case of minors, they can be donors with parental consent.

What should I do if I want to change the donation will?

You can contact the National Institute of Health by phone: 220-0925 in Bogotá and 018000113400.

If you registered before 2014 and have no passcode to access the website, you should contact the National Institute of Health by phone: (+57 1) 2 20 77 00 ext. 1703 – 1704 o 2 20 09 25.

How are donated organs and tissues allocated?

The Network of Donation and Transplantation was created by the Ministry of Health to regulate and coordinate the processes of donation and transplantation of organs and tissues, in order to make them accessible in a timely and efficient manner.

What is the Network of Donation and Transplantation?

The Network of Donation and Transplantation is a government entity that is responsible for regulating and coordinating the processes of donation and transplantation of organs and tissues, in order to make them accessible in a timely and efficient manner.

How is the process to register in a waiting list?

The waiting list is composed of potential transplant recipients who are waiting for a transplant.

What should I do if I registered before 2014 and have no passcode to access the website?

You can contact the National Institute of Health by phone: (+57 1) 2 20 77 00 ext. 1703 – 1704 o 2 20 09 25.

Where can I find more information on organ and tissue donation?

The National Institute of Health contact

Website: www.ins.gov.co

National toll free, 24 hours: 01 8000 11 34 00

Bogotá phone: (+57 1) 2 20 77 00 ext. 1703 – 1704 o 2 20 09 25.

Fax: (+571) 220 0901

Email: contactenos@ins.gov.co

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Contact: http://www.ins.gov.co/informacion-ciudadano/Paginas/chat.aspx