



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABO Blood Group or Blood Type

The type of blood identified by antigens A, B, AB or none (type O) on red blood cells.

ABO Compatibility

Closeness in matching of blood and tissue type between a donor and recipient. Helps to determine whether or not a transplanted organ will be rejected.

Antibody

A protein substance developed by the immune system in response to a foreign substance. Because the antibodies attack the transplanted organ, transplant patients must take powerful anti-rejection medications.

Anti-Rejection Medications

Medications that are taken to help the body accept the transplanted organ.

Blood Vessels

The veins, arteries, and capillaries through which blood flows in the body. Blood vessels are often used in heart surgeries.

Bone Marrow

A spongy tissue inside of large bones where the body's blood cells (red, white & platelets) are made.

Bones

Long bones can be donated for individuals that have a bone deformity or in some cases certain types of cancer.

Brain Death

Occurs when a person's brain activity stops permanently. All brain tissue is dead, no blood flow to the brain and no electrical activity present in the brain. No chance of recovery.

Brain Stem

Is an extension at the base of the brain that controls basic, life-sustaining functions such as heart rate, respiration, and body temperature.

Cardiac Death

Death resulting from total, irreversible loss of the heartbeat and respiration.

Coma

When a portion of the brain is injured. Brain is still receiving blood flow and electrical activity is present in the brain. Recovery is possible.

Cord Blood

Once the umbilical cord has been cut the remaining blood in the umbilical cord is drawn into a collection bag. Cord blood comes from a newborn's umbilical cord and is collected immediately after birth.

Cornea

Transparent structure over the front of the eye that allows light to enter. A cornea resembles a contact lens in size and appearance.

Cross Match

A positive cross match test shows the donor and recipient to be incompatible. A negative cross match test shows no reaction between a donor and a potential recipient, meaning they are compatible.

Deceased Donor

Brain activity has permanently stopped and brain death has been declared by a physician.

Dialysis

Process of removing toxins and fluid from the blood. Normally, the kidneys perform this function. If the kidneys are damaged by disease or trauma, dialysis must be used.

Direct Donation

Donor families may request that their loved one's organs be donated to someone they know who needs a transplant.

Donor Registry

Provide authorized professionals access to a confidential database of registered organ donors. All registries are completely voluntary and some are usually affiliated with the local motor vehicle department.

End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)

A disease that leads to the permanent failure of a kidney and the patient requires dialysis or a transplant.

Graft

A tissue or organ that is transplanted.

Heart

The heart is a muscular organ that pumps oxygen-rich blood to all parts of the body. The heart is essential to life because all cells need oxygen to function.

Heart Valves

Tissues that open and close, regulating the flow of blood into and out of the heart.

Immunosuppression

The use of medication to prevent the body from rejecting a transplanted organ by decreasing the body's natural response to foreign materials.

Intestines

The part of the intestine (the digestive track) that is transplanted is only a portion of the small intestine and is usually transplanted with the liver.

Kidneys

Pair of organs that maintain proper water and electrolytes to regulate and filter the blood of metabolic waste, which is excreted as urine.

Ligament

Connective tissue that attach muscle to bone, often used to repair sport injuries.

Liver

The body's largest organ. Some of its functions include: producing bile to help break down fats; storing fats, sugars, iron and vitamins for later use by the body; and making proteins needed for normal blood clotting. The liver also removes drugs, alcohol and other substances that may be harmful to the body.

Living Donor

An individual in good health who has undergone screening and compatibility testing and is able to donate a kidney, a portion of a liver or a lung, bone marrow, blood to another person.

Lungs

A pair of spongy organs that remove carbon dioxide from the blood and enriches it with oxygen.

Match

The compatibility between the donor and the recipient. The more appropriate the match, the greater the chance of a successful transplant.

Organ Allocation

The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) maintains a national computerized list of patients awaiting heart, kidney, lung, liver, intestine and pancreas transplants. Donors are matched against the list of recipients before an organ is offered for transplantation. The computer first rules out potential recipients incompatible for blood type and body size. A patient's priority is determined by a number of variables including, but not limited to, medical urgency, time waiting and the degree of match with the donor. The UNOS system does not consider race, income, or social status when determining potential recipients.

Organ Procurement Organization (OPO)

The organization responsible for donor identification and the allocation, surgical removal, preservation, and transportation of organs and tissue for transplant.

Pancreas

A long shaped gland, which lies behind the stomach and secretes pancreatic juice into the lower end of the stomach that aids in the digestion of proteins, carbohydrates and fats.

Preservation

The technique used to keep organs or tissues viable once they are removed from the donor. Preservation fluids and reduced temperatures assist in preserving vital organs. The time between organ donation surgery and transplant surgery is kept to a minimum.

Procurement

The removal of organs or tissues for transplantation.

Rejection

Occurs when the body tries to attack a transplanted organ because it reacts to the organ or tissue as a foreign object.

Renal

Related to or involving the kidneys.

Sclera

The white outer layer of the eyeball. When donated is used to rebuild eardrums.

Skin Graft

A thin layer of skin applied to a patient to increase protection, aid in healing, and decrease infection and fluid loss, usually used over a burn.

Tendon

Tough tissue that connects a muscle with a bone.

Tissue Typing

The process of identifying the human antigens in an individual. Tissue typing is done for all potential kidney donors and recipients to ensure the closest possible matching of antigens.

United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS)

UNOS is a private, non-profit organization. Some of the duties include maintaining the national organ transplant waiting list, coordinating the matching and distribution of donated organs, and collecting data on transplant recipients, donors and outcomes.

Waiting List

After evaluation by the transplant physician, a patient is added to the national waiting list by a transplant center. Each time a donor organ becomes available, the UNOS computer generates a list of potential recipients based on factors that include genetic similarity, organ size, medical urgency and time on the waiting list. Through this process, a new list is generated each time an organ becomes available.