

Arteries – Vessels that carry blood away from the heart.

Bone Marrow – Substance in the bone cavity that is important in the production of red and white blood cells.

Brain death – Total cessation of brain function, including brain stem function. There is no oxygen or blood flow to the brain and the brain no longer functions in any manner and will never function again.

Cadaveric organ – An organ removed from a deceased person and used to replace a diseased or failed organ in a recipient. It is possible for a single deceased donor to save or help many people.

Cardiac death – Absence of heart beat with no chance for resuscitation.

Coma – Any state of unconsciousness, whether permanent or temporary. Not the same as brain death.

Cornea – Transparent covering of the eye.

Cyclosporine – Immunosuppressive drug that helps prevent organ rejection.

Dialysis – Process that removes toxic materials from the blood and maintains the fluid and salt balance of the body.

Donor – A person who gives organs or tissues for transplantation.

Donor card – A card indicating one's desire to be an organ or tissue donor.

Donor registry – A database of individuals who have designated themselves as organ and tissue donors, which can be accessed when a death occurs to determine the deceased's donation wishes.

End-stage renal disease – Occurs when the kidneys are no longer able to function at a level that is necessary for day-to-day life.

First person consent – Term often popularly used to describe laws that provide that when a person dies having indicated a decision to be a donor through specified methods, OPOs must honor the donor's intentions and family consent is not necessary prior to donation.

Heart – Organ that circulates blood to the body's cells.

Immunosuppressive drug – Chemical agent that suppresses the body's tendency to reject foreign elements.

Insulin – Hormone produced by the pancreas; regulates glucose metabolism.

Kidneys – Organs responsible for removing toxic substances from the blood and maintaining fluid and salt balance.

Life-enhancing – Enhances the recipient's overall health and life; refers to tissues and organs.

Liver – Organ responsible for the conversion of nutrients into usable substances.

Living donor – A living person who donates a kidney, or part of an organ, to another person. This could be a friend or relative of the recipient or a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

Lungs – Organs responsible for gas exchange.

NOTA – The National Organ Transplant Act of 1984 outlawed the sale of human organs and tissues, and initiated the development of a national system for organ sharing.

OPO – Organ procurement organization, a Federally designated nonprofit organization responsible for coordinating organ donation and educating the public about donation in a specific geographical area.

OPTN – Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, the national computer network that matches donated organs with recipients. OPTN's purpose is to promote, facilitate, and scientifically advance organ procurement and transplantation on a national scale.

Organ procurement coordinator – Typically a registered nurse with critical care experience. The coordinator is responsible for maintaining the donor, assisting with organ recovery, and coordinating placement of organs for transplant.

Pancreas – Organ that secretes digestive enzymes as well as insulin for blood sugar metabolism.

Recipient – A person who receives an organ or tissue transplant.

Rejection – Process by which the body's immune system recognizes a transplanted tissue or organ as foreign and tries to destroy it.

Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients – A database of post-transplant information administered by a not-for-profit health research organization. The database supports the ongoing evaluation of advances in transplant surgery techniques and organ preservation, improvements in matching donor organs with recipients, and developments in immunosuppressive therapies in order to reduce the size of the waiting list and to improve transplant outcomes.

Tendons – Strong, nonelastic bands of tissue that connect muscle to bone.

Tissue – A general term for transplantable parts of the body other than organs; includes bones, tendons, ligaments, corneas, heart valves, skin, veins, and some nerves.

Tissue typing – The laboratory procedure to determine the HLA or genetic makeup of an organ donor.

Transplantation – Transfer of an organ or tissue from one person's body into another person's body to replace a diseased or failed organ or tissue.

Veins – Vessels that carry blood back to the heart from the body or lungs.

Waiting list – A national computerized list of patients who are waiting for organ transplants.