Simon’s Story

I was 46 when, on a lovely June afternoon, my life changed overnight. I was playing football with the local junior school children who I was helping to train. I suddenly felt dizzy and next thing I knew, the paramedics were taking me to hospital.

It turned out that I had dilated cardiomyopathy – in other words, my heart was wearing out. My condition deteriorated. I was in constant pain, housebound, with little pleasure left in life. Two years later I was told that I had a one year life expectancy. The only remaining option was a heart transplant, which wasn’t guaranteed. Eleven months into my one year life-expectancy, I received a call saying that a matching donor heart may have been found. Although I’d been warned of possible false alarms and complications, ten hours later I was on the road to recovery in intensive care. I’ve gone from strength to strength, recently completing a 10k run and learning to ski.

I’ve since learned that the organ donor was 55 when he suddenly collapsed whilst getting out of bed one morning. He died shortly afterwards of a brain haemorrhage. His family didn’t hesitate to allow his organs to be used for transplantation to help others, knowing that this was his wish. Knowing that others have benefitted from his organs has helped them come to terms with his tragic and sudden death.

I am so thankful that the donor had discussed his wishes with his family before he was taken ill. There is never a day goes by when I don’t think of the person who gave me this precious gift.
Why it’s important

Have you considered registering as an organ donor and potentially helping someone after your death? If this is something you want to do, it’s important to talk about your decision with those close to you, and to sign up to the NHS Organ Donor Register.

Did you know?

• The NHS Organ Donor Register is a confidential and secure database which records the wishes of everyone who has decided to donate organs after they die. It’s also the database which medical staff will consult to see if a person has decided to be a donor.
• If you die in circumstances where donation is possible, your next of kin could be asked to support your decision to be a donor. Letting them know what you’ve decided now makes it much easier for them.
• Every donor is precious. Fewer than 5,000 people each year in the UK die in circumstances where they can become a donor. And if their families say no to donation, someone waiting for a transplant misses out.
• You can choose to donate some or all of your organs – the choice is yours – and you can change your mind at any time.
• There is no upper age limit – everyone who is considered legally competent, irrespective of age or health, can join the NHS Organ Donor Register.
• Health professionals have a duty of care to try to save life first. If, despite all their efforts the patient dies, their wish to be an organ donor may then be fulfilled.

For more information and answers to frequently asked questions about organ donation and transplantation visit www.organdonation.nhs.uk

How to register

Please help us to turn people’s good intentions about organ donation into action by registering on the NHS Organ Donor Register.

Complete the registration form on the right of this leaflet and return to:
FREEPOST RRZK-SHUX-SBCK
NHS Blood and Transplant
Fox Den Road
Stoke Gifford
BRISTOL
BS34 8RR

Please complete in CAPITAL LETTERS using a black ballpoint pen.
*indicates that a field must be completed.

My name and address
Surname*
Forename(s)*
Date of birth*  /  /  Male  Female
Address*
Postcode*
Telephone
Mobile
Email

My wishes
I want to donate: (Please tick the boxes that apply)
A. any of my organs and tissue
B. my kidneys
C. heart
D. liver
E. small bowel
F. eyes
G. lungs
H. pancreas
I. tissue
for transplantation after my death.

Signature
Date

Please tick here if you would like to receive future information about blood, organ and tissue donation from NHS Blood and Transplant.

My ethnic origin
There’s a better chance of getting a closer match and a successful transplant if the donor and recipient are from the same ethnic group. Please tick the ethnic group which best describes you.
White: British  Irish  Other
Mixed: White/Black Caribbean  White/Asian  White/Black African  Other
Asian or Asian British: Indian  Pakistani  Bangladeshi  Other
Black or Black British: Caribbean  African  Other
Other ethnic categories: Chinese  Other
Not stated:

Data Protection Assurance. Completion of this form is for the purpose of recording your wishes to become an organ donor. All information provided to NHS Blood and Transplant is used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Your data may be handled on our behalf in a country not normally covered by EU Data Protection law. If so, we will ensure that the data will be protected by the same high standards as in the UK. Further details about how your personal details can be found at www.nhsbt.nhs.uk or by calling 0300 123 23 23.

Please confirm you are over 18.

If you wish to amend or withdraw your record from the NHS Organ Donor Register you can do so by calling the Organ Donor Line on 0300 123 23 23, visiting www.organdonation.nhs.uk or writing to us at the address overleaf.