Hepatitis C: A Plea for Organ Donation

April 19, 2013 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

April is National Donate Life month, and today is National Donate Life Blue and Green Day. According to *Donate Life America*, National Donate Life Blue and Green Day is an initiative to register new organ, eye and tissue donors. Although not everyone with hepatitis C will need a liver transplant, this issue is important to us all.

In 1963, the first human liver transplant was attempted in Denver, Colorado by a team headed by Thomas Starzl, MD. Four years later, the procedure was performed successfully. Survival rates have been steadily improving, particularly with the introduction of anti-rejection medications. The five-year survival rate is roughly 75%.

The most common reason for liver transplantation in the U.S. is chronic hepatitis C virus There are more than 16, 000 people on the liver transplant list. Due to a shortage of donated organs, some people will die before receiving a life-saving transplant.

Most liver transplants use organs from deceased donors. However, the liver's remarkable ability to regenerate allows us to use partial livers from living donors. Donating a liver is risky to the living donor, and not something to be entered into lightly. Organs from people with hepatitis C antibody may be potential candidates for transplantation.

To learn more, visit Donate Life

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