Hepatitis C and Organ Donation

April 13, 2015 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

Many of us have lost friends and family members to hepatitis C. Some of these deaths might have been prevented, if it weren't for the sad fact that there is a huge shortage of donated organs.

April is National Donate Life Month, and Friday April 17 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. Not everyone with hepatitis C will need a liver transplant, but this issue is important to us all.

Here are some facts about organ donation:

- You can donate organs even if you test positive for hepatitis C antibody. Hepatitis C antibody-positive organs are offered only to hepatitis C-positive people. In this case, if the donated organ is in better condition than the potential recipient's organ and the person on the list would otherwise die, hepatitis C antibody-positive organs are considered.
- In 2014, approximately 65 people every day had an organ transplant.
- Nearly 58% of patients awaiting lifesaving transplants are minorities.
- Approximately 21 people die every day waiting for a donated organ.
- More than 17,000 people are on the liver transplant list waiting for a donated organ.
- Anyone can donate an organ, regardless of age, race, or medical history (minors need to have permission from parent or guardian; although anyone can donate, not all organs are suitable for transplantation).
- All major religions in the U.S. support organ donation and see it as a compassionate gift.
- If you are a potential organ donor, saving your life is still the medical priority.
- Organ donors may still have an open casket funeral.
- There is no cost to the donor or family for organ donation.

Most liver transplants use 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.

More than 121 million people, approximately 50% of the U.S. adult population, are registered organ, eye and tissue donors. Are you one of them? Click on DonateLife for more information.

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