



  English

Save the Life of Someone You'll Never Meet

# Save the Life of Someone You'll Never Meet

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When I first got my driver's license, I was excited to finally be able to drive with no restrictions, but to also be able to sign up to be an organ donor. Anyone can be a donor, regardless of age or medical history, and it's super easy to sign up; all I had to do at the time in New York was check a box on a form at the DMV. If you haven't already joined the Donor Registry and would like to, you can sign up at your local DMV like I did, or online at [organdonor.gov](https://organdonor.gov), where you can find state-specific information for joining the registry. April is National Donate Life Month, so now would be a great time to join!

Being an organ donor is an easy and selfless thing to do, and there are so many ways your organs, eyes, and/or tissue may be able to help someone else.

There are multiple ways you can donate. There's deceased donation; this is when you give an organ or a part of an organ at the time of your death for the purpose of transplantation to someone else. There's also living donation, and there are a few types: directed donation, where you specifically name the person you're donating to; and non-directed donation, where you donate to someone based on medical need.

The Donor Registry covers these donation types, but there are also other ways to make living donations. You can donate blood, bone marrow, or stem cells, and there are easy ways to sign up to donate any of these. Blood is especially important to donate right now; there is always a shortage of blood donations, but the COVID-19 pandemic made this even worse. I finally started donating blood this year at a [Vitalant](#) location near me. If you're interested in donating blood too, you can also find a place near you to donate through the [American Red Cross](#).

I've also joined the [Be the Match](#) registry in the hopes that I can one day donate bone marrow to someone who needs it. Be the Match connects patients with life-threatening blood cancers, like leukemia and lymphoma, to potential bone marrow and cord blood donors who may be able to save their lives. Signing up for Be the Match was even easier than signing up for the Donor Registry or a blood donation; I signed up at [join.bethematch.org](https://join.bethematch.org) and it only took a few minutes. Once I got my kit in the mail, I took my cheek swabs and mailed them back right away. A few weeks later, I got a text confirming everything, and now I'm officially part of the Be the Match Registry!

Both choices were long overdue; up until a few years ago, the only thing stopping me from donating blood was an intense fear of the process itself. I could get my annual flu shot and other vaccines with no issue (as long as I never looked at the needle going into my arm; it's going to be hard to take a selfie when I can [finally get](#)

my COVID-19 vaccine), but something about the feeling of blood being taken out would creep me out and make me get clammy and faint unless I laid down during the blood draw, and even then, I would often faint upon getting up after they were done taking my blood.

Then a few years ago I had a health scare and had to get a bone marrow biopsy, which was a painful experience for me. I've heard they're not always painful, but let me tell you, I only got local anesthesia and I can still remember the feeling of the hollow needle going into the back of my hipbone. Luckily, I was fine, and completely cured of my previous fear of needles. Going through that process also got me thinking about people who may have gone through a bone marrow biopsy, or something harder, and weren't fine. Maybe if someone had donated bone marrow or blood they would have been.

I still hate the feeling of getting my blood taken, but knowing that I'm helping someone in need makes the creepy feeling worth it. And even though my bone marrow biopsy was not a fun experience and I was so sore that I had trouble walking for a few days after, I know I could go through it again if it meant potentially saving someone else's life, even though I'll never get to meet them.

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