

DGFG Annual report 2023

Dear partners and interested parties

2023 was a good year for tissue donation: we were able to realize a total of 3,505 tissue donations – an increase of 13 percent compared to the previous year. 9,446 next-of-kin interviews and an approval rate of approximately 41 percent continuously show that the willingness to donate tissue and the desire to help other people with a donation is strong among the German population. In total, we provided 7,572 patients with a tissue transplant, of these 5,046 were corneas. The donation program for bone and ligaments has also become well established in our network with a total of 44 donations. One issue that remains challenging is the shortage of heart valves and blood vessels. That is why in 2024 our efforts will continue to focus on increasing the number of heart valve and blood vessel donations.



Download the interactive DGFG Annual Report 2023 (full version in German only)!

Martin Börgel, Managing Director

Tissue donation in numbers

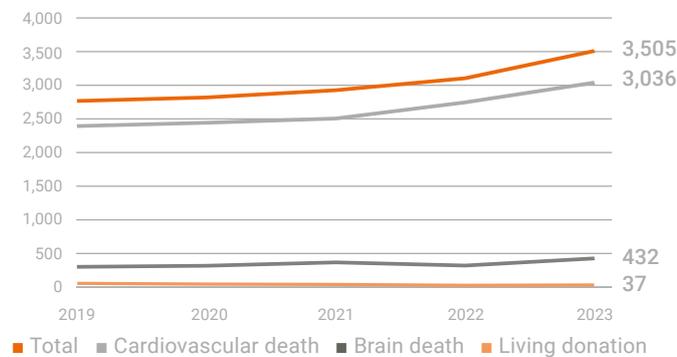
3,505 ^{↑+13%} people donated their tissue in 2023.

7,572 ^{↑+5.6%} tissue transplants were allocated in 2023.

This corresponds to 7,571 ^{↑+13.4%} donated tissue preparations.

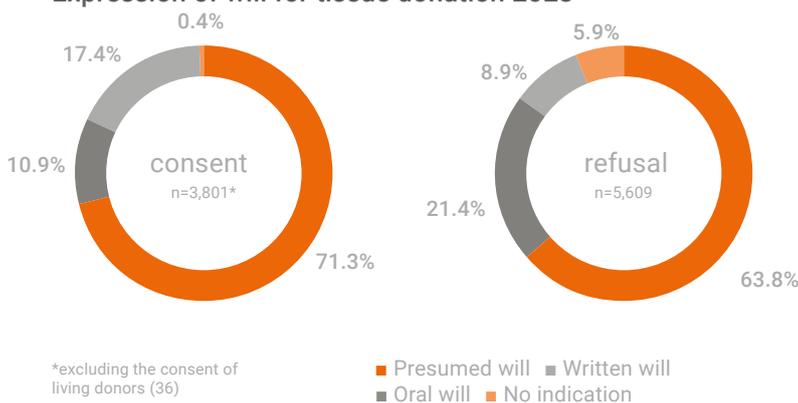
40.6% ^{↓-1.8%} consented to tissue donation in 2023.

Number of tissue donors by type of donation 2019–2023



In 2023, the DGFG was able to realize 3,505 tissue donations. 86.6 percent of donors were cardiovascular decedents. The number of living donors (placenta and heart valves) increased from 31 in 2022 to 37 in 2023. The number of tissue donors from organ donation who died from an irreversible loss of brain function (brain death) increased from 326 in 2022 to 432 in 2023.

Expression of will for tissue donation 2023

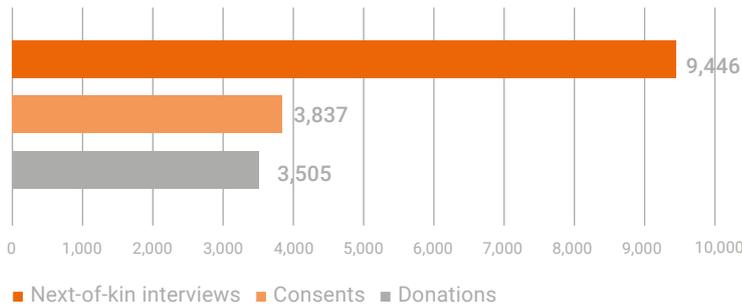


In 2023, 28.3 percent of tissue donations were based on an oral or written declaration of intent – a further positive development compared to the previous year. Around 30 percent of potential donors decided against tissue donation during their lifetime. The decision to donate tissue is still predominantly based on the presumed will of the determined by the next of kin – 71.3 percent in the case of consent and 63.8 percent in the case of refusal. The will of the deceased is often not known to the relatives. A conversation during their lifetime, a register entry or a completed organ and tissue donation card can help relatives in the decision-making process.

Launch of the German organ donor registry

The past year was characterized by political debates surrounding the introduction of the organ donor register, which is an integral part of the law to strengthen decision-making in organ donation that came into force on March 1, 2022. In February 2024, the German Federal Ministry of Health presented a phased plan for the gradual launch of the register. All tissue establishments with the relevant permits under pharmaceutical law for tissue recovery will be connected to the telematics infrastructure and ultimately the register by January 1, 2025. As the largest tissue establishment in Germany, the DGFG will soon be able to query the new register for declarations of intent during the donation process. Since March 18, 2024 citizens are able to document their will online at www.organspende-register.de.

Next-of-kin interviews vs. consents and donations 2023



In 2023, the DGFG received 51,231 potential donor notifications. If there are no medical reasons to exclude the donor and no organizational obstacles, the coordinators conduct next-of-kin interviews. In 2023, this was the case 9,446 times. 3,837 people or their relatives agreed to tissue donation. The DGFG was finally able to realize 3,505 tissue donations in 2023.

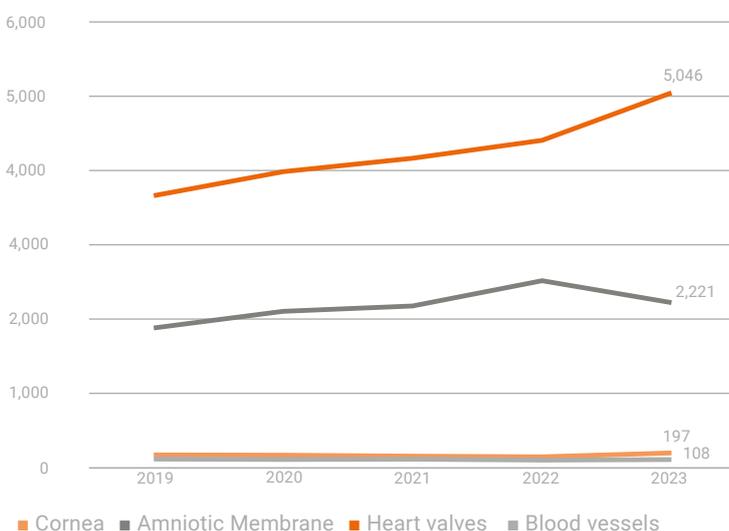
Donated tissue preparations 2019–2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cornea	5,234	5,401	5,612	6,022	6,736
Heart valves	378	393	445	328	508
Blood vessels	206	267	335	278	259
Placenta (amnion)	40	20	30	21	24
Bones and ligaments	0	0	0	30*	44*
Total	5,858	6,081	6,422	6,679	7,571

In 2023, 7,571 donated tissues were processed by the tissue banks in the DGFG network. Due to the increase in organ donations in 2023, the DGFG processed more heart valves than in the previous year. In 2023, the DGFG was also able to expand its donation program for musculoskeletal tissue and realized 44 donations of bones and ligaments. The tissue preparations obtained were sent to the non-profit German Institute for Cell and Tissue Replacement (DIZG) in Berlin for further processing.

*Number of donations without individual tissue preparations

Number of tissue grafts allocated 2019–2023



The number of delivered tissue transplants by the DGFG increased by 5.6 percent in 2023 compared to the previous year: In 2023, the DGFG was able to provide a total of 7,572 patients with a tissue transplant, including 5,046 patients receiving a cornea. Among the 2,221 amniotic membranes delivered, 139 were AmnioClip-plus. There was an increase in the allocation of heart valves: 197 patients received a heart valve from the DGFG network – which is 52 more than the year before. However, the demand is still very high: in 2023, the DGFG received more than 430 requests for a heart valve and was thus able to serve less than half of them.