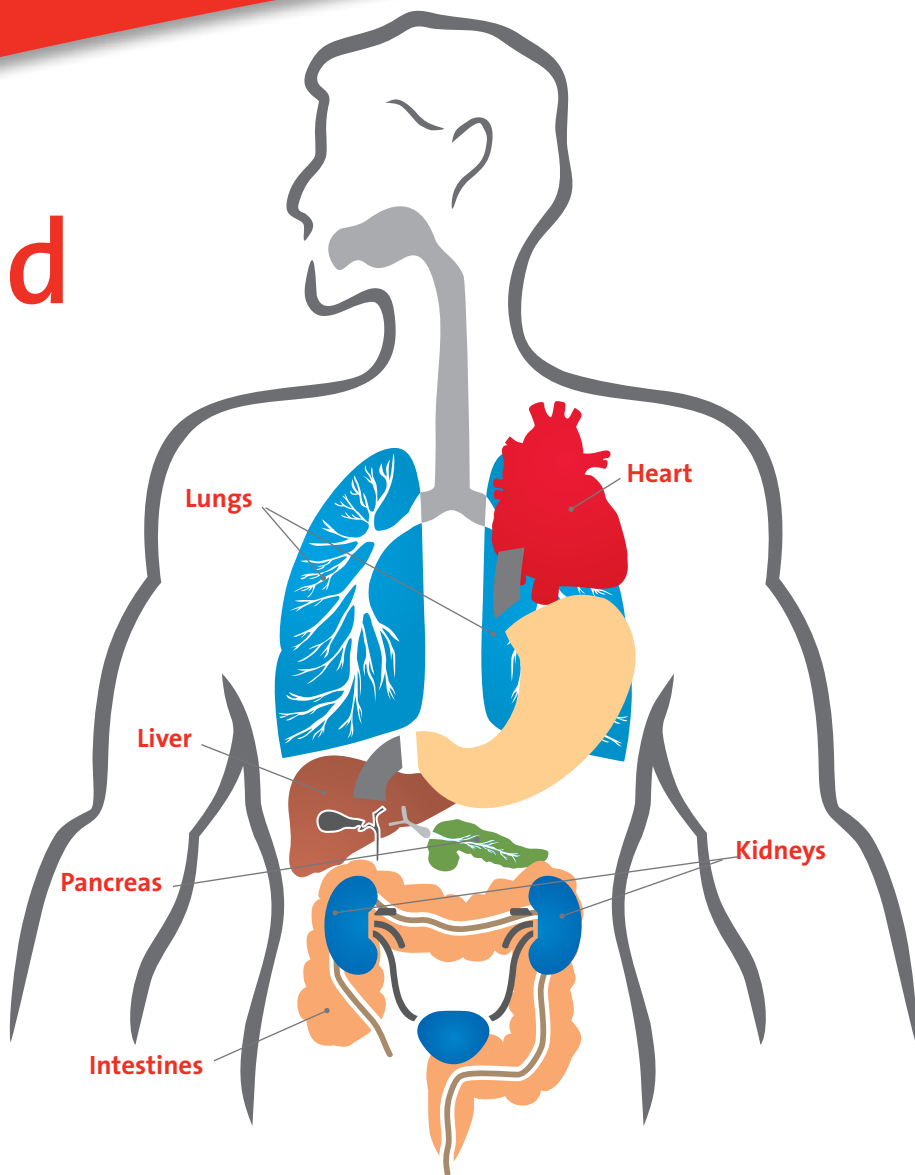


Sign Up and Save a Life

- ▶ One organ donor can save up to **8** lives
- ▶ Success rates for organ transplants average **80 to 90%**
- ▶ More than **121,000** people nationally are waiting for a transplant
- ▶ Nearly **10,000** people are waiting in New York State
- ▶ Every **10** minutes the waiting list grows by **1**
- ▶ Every **18** hours someone in New York State dies waiting for an organ
- ▶ **ONLY 27%** of New York State residents are registered organ donors versus **50%** of residents nationwide



Consider Becoming a Living Donor

Living organ donation for kidney, as well as partial donations for liver, lung, and intestines, helps to save the lives of people awaiting organ transplant. Currently, living organ donors account for almost half of all organ donations in the U.S.

EASY TO REGISTER

- Stop by a NewYork-Presbyterian WorkForce Health and Safety office
- Go to www.organdonor.gov or liveonny.org
- Sign up when you register at the Department of Motor Vehicles or when you register to vote

Turn the page to learn how organ donation changed the lives of a fellow NewYork-Presbyterian employee and her family. ➤

To Give and to Receive: A Family's Journey through Liver Transplant



Top: Last month Dr. Jose Goris, transplant recipient (left), joined Mario "Rigo" Peralta, his friend and organ donor, at Rigo's museum exhibit.

Bottom: The Goris family

Life changed dramatically three months after Jose Goris and Maria Abreu married in 1995, when Jose, a doctor pursuing a pathology fellowship, was suddenly diagnosed with sclerosing cholangitis, a severe liver disease that causes destruction of the bile ducts. Rushed by ambulance to the hospital, Jose spent the next two weeks in the Intensive Care Unit. Maria, who was working in the immunopathology laboratory at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, recalls the shock of learning that her seemingly healthy young husband would likely need a liver transplant at some point.

After recovering from his hospitalization, Jose's condition stabilized and their lives continued on. "My husband was fine for many years," says Maria. "He was able to finish his fellowship and go on to have a very busy practice. We lived a normal life." So impressed by the care her husband had received, Maria was inspired to change careers and study to become a physician assistant (PA), eventually taking a position as a transplant surgical PA at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell in 1999.

In November 2002 Jose's annual checkup brought disheartening news. A small nodule had appeared on his liver. "The doctors noticed that there was a decline and said 'it's getting to be time for a liver transplant,'" says Maria, who had just become pregnant with their first child. "We were told that the best approach would be to find a living donor. My husband is very connected in his community here and in his hometown in the Dominican Republic, so we started to spread the word that he needed a transplant. The person who stepped forward, Mario Peralta, is actually his friend. Jose comes from a small town, and he would always try and help people who were underprivileged. Mario came from a family of simpler means, but he's an artist. When Jose was younger, he would help Mario buy brushes or whatever he needed to help him pursue his artistic career."

In 2003, the transplant was successfully performed at the Center for Liver Disease and Transplantation at NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center. "Post-transplant, Jose had a few admissions to the Hospital, but nothing significant. He lives a very full and busy professional life with three practices," says Maria.

In looking back on their experience, Maria and Jose are beyond grateful, first to Mario for donating his liver. "We can never do anything to repay what he's done for us," she says. "We have a link, a bond. He is forever in our lives, as are his kids and his wife." Maria also points to their large extended family and many friends who supported them throughout the process. She also includes in that family all of the NewYork-Presbyterian physicians, nurses, and staff who cared for Jose and for her.

"Often I think of transplant as a journey...an emotionally charged journey for all involved," adds Maria, who offers the following advice for anyone going through transplant. "As with everything in life, educate yourself and those around you. Be your loved one's advocate and champion and also seek support from others in similar situations."