

## What can be donated, and who can be helped?

### Lungs

A lung transplant could mean unassisted breathing for someone with a disease like cystic fibrosis.

### Liver

A liver transplant can restore quality of life for someone with liver failure.

### Kidneys

A kidney transplant can free someone from dialysis – a treatment that means being in the hospital two to five days every week.

### Pancreas

A pancreas transplant can eliminate insulin need for people with diabetes.

### Tissue

Corneas restore vision. Heart valves improve heart function. Skin grafts are essential for healing in burn survivors. Connective tissue restores mobility.

A number of factors are considered in matching donors to recipients. Each patient's eligibility to donate organs is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.



The grief that comes with the loss of a loved one is overwhelming.

Please talk to a member of your health-care team if you would like more information about the organ and tissue donation process or require any additional support.



## Organ donation after circulatory determination of death



Organs & Tissues  
for Life

This pamphlet provides a brief overview of the process for organ and tissue donation after circulatory determination of death (DCD), an opportunity for your loved one and family to leave a lasting legacy through the gift of organ donation.

## The DCD process

1. A representative of the provincial organ donation organization and your loved one's health-care team will guide you through the consent process.
2. Your family will be asked to complete a questionnaire about your loved one's medical and social history.
3. A clinical exam and several assessments will be performed to determine which organs might be suitable for transplant.
4. Organ recovery is a time-sensitive process and will be coordinated with your family, the health-care team and the transplant surgeons.
5. The planned withdrawal of life-sustaining measures – usually the breathing machine – will take place in or near the operating room.
6. When death occurs, your family will have a few minutes to say goodbye to your loved one prior to organ recovery.
7. Organ recovery will occur in the operating room.
8. If desired, a representative of the provincial organ donation organization will contact you once the organ recovery is complete.

## Consent for organ donation

Consent for organ donation must be completed by your loved one's substitute decision-maker. Consent is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time during the donation process.

Many families choose to donate because it creates a legacy for their loved one's life, alleviates the suffering of other patients and families, and provides some comfort at what can be one of the most difficult times of their lives.



Regardless of your donation decision, your loved one and your family will receive the highest-quality end-of-life care possible.

## Determining suitability

Evaluating which organs are suitable for transplantation may involve the following:

- Physical examination
- Assessment of vital signs (blood pressure, heart rate, temperature, and rate of breathing)
- Blood tests
- X-ray and ultrasound imaging

If any of the necessary assessments involve risks to your loved one, these risks will be discussed with you beforehand.

## Organ recovery

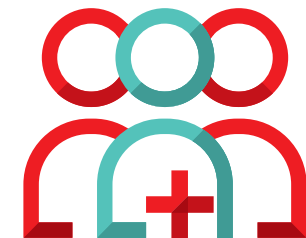
The provincial organ donation organization will coordinate the organ recovery. A number of surgeons will be involved in the recovery, some of whom may come from other cities or provinces.

You may stay with your loved one from the time when life-sustaining measures are withdrawn until the time of death. Your loved one will be kept comfortable during this period using medications that are standard for end-of-life care.

To ensure the organs are safe for transplant, death must occur within a timeframe specified by the transplant surgeons. If death does not occur within this timeframe, organ recovery will not proceed.

It may be possible to accommodate your family's wishes to honour or acknowledge your loved one's gift before and/or at the time of organ recovery. For example, a moment of silence, a prayer to be said, or a favourite song to be played.

Tissue recovery will occur after organ recovery.



Thousands of Canadians are currently waiting for a life-saving transplant.