



Deonú Aistriú Orgán Éireann  
Organ Donation Transplant Ireland

# Information on Organ Donation and Transplantation in Ireland



## **The Gift of Life**

The decision to donate a loved one's organs is often made at a time of profound loss and sadness. However this act of generosity and humanity not only transforms and saves the lives of others but can also give healing and consolation, and some meaning to the seeming futility of an inexplicable loss. If you are considering donating your loved one's organs this leaflet may answer some of your questions.

### **Is there someone I can talk to?**

Specialist staff will be available to discuss any questions you may have and provide any further information you may require. You are given time to discuss your thoughts about organ donation with your family and friends. It is important to think about what your loved one would have wanted.

### **What organs can be donated?**

Organs that can be donated in Ireland are: heart, lungs, liver, pancreas and kidneys.

## Who can be considered a potential organ donor?

A potential donor has to be in a hospital and maintained on a life support machine (ventilator) before they can become an organ donor.

A person's organs can be donated after:

- brain stem death,
- cardiac death.

## What is brain stem death?

Brain stem death means that there is no blood flow or oxygen to the brain. The brain is no longer functioning. There is no hope of recovery. The patient cannot breathe without the help of the ventilator. Doctors will carry out tests to confirm brain stem death. Two sets of tests are carried out. The time of death recorded on the death certificate is when the second set of brain stem tests have been completed.

## **What is cardiac death?**

Cardiac death happens after an illness or injury from which a patient cannot recover. The patient is not brain dead, but has no hope of recovery. The patient cannot survive without the support of a ventilator and medication.

## **What happens if I decide to consent to organ donation on behalf of a loved one?**

If you decide to consent to organ donation on behalf of a loved one, we need to ask you questions about the health and lifestyle of your deceased loved one. You may find some of these questions sensitive but they are necessary so that the transplantation process can proceed.

Written consent is required from you, the next of kin, at the time of donation. Only organs that you give consent for can be donated and used for transplantation. We take blood tests, including one for viruses, to ensure that organs are suitable for donation. We will inform you if there are any health implications as a result of this testing.

## Religion

All religions support organ donation. If you have any concerns please speak to Hospital Staff.

## How does the organ donation process happen?

Organ donation only takes place after your loved one has died. The operation is carried out by highly skilled doctors and nurses in the operating theatre in this hospital. The dignity and respect of your loved one is a priority at all times.

## What happens after the donation operation?

After the donation operation, your loved one looks the same. The donation process will not delay funeral arrangements. The donor co ordinator will write to the donor family after a few weeks giving an update of each person who benefitted from the organ donation. The identity of your loved one and the person who received the donated organs are at all times kept confidential.

## ***The gift of life: what does it mean?***

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***Organ donors save hundreds of people's lives each year.***

***A recent survey has shown that more than 80% of the Irish population agree with organ donation.***

***Thank you for considering the gift of life.***

## Useful Links

Strange Boat Donor Foundation  
[www.organdonation.ie](http://www.organdonation.ie)

Irish Kidney Association  
[www.ika.ie](http://www.ika.ie)



*National Organ Donor Commemorative Garden,  
located in Quincentennial Park, Salthill, Galway.*

## Contact:

Organ donor co-ordinator office,  
Monday to Friday 8am-5pm on:

**01 878 8388**



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive