



Donation and Choices

Organ and tissue Donation

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ABOUT NHS BLOOD AND TRANSPLANT

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) works to save and improve thousands of lives every year through blood, organ, tissue and stem cell donation.

The service relies on the generosity of volunteer donors. Each year in England donors give around 1.4 million donations of blood* and 4,000 organs*. But more young donors are needed to help save more lives.

We hope to empower you to discuss donation with your families so they can make informed decisions.

*NHSBT donation statistics from 2019-2020

Visit NHSBT to find out more
www.nhsbt.nhs.uk



SCAN ME

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN BEING AN ORGAN AND TISSUE DONOR?



Register the decision to donate organs and/or tissue after death on the NHS Organ Donation Register. Share the decision with family/loved ones.

www.organdonation.nhs.uk/register-your-decision



If someone dies in circumstances where organ and/or tissue donation may be a possibility, specialist nurses would check the NHS Organ Donor Register to see if that person had registered a decision about organ and tissue donation.



The specialist nurse will then discuss the donor's registered/last known decision with their family as part of end of life discussions. The donor's faith, beliefs and culture will always be respected.



One organ donor can save and transform up to nine lives and many more by donating tissue.

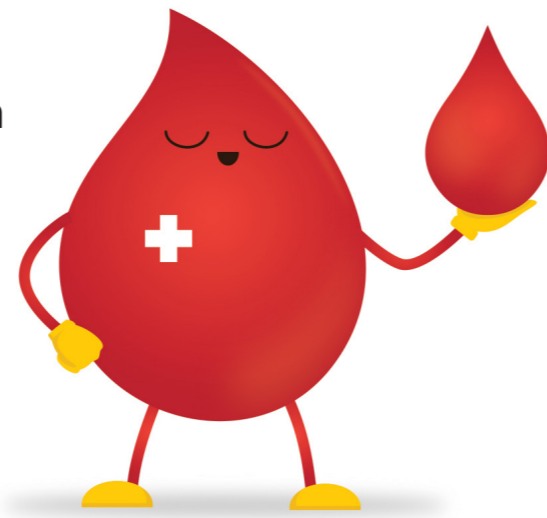
WHY ARE MORE DONORS NEEDED?

But there is still a need for more donors to give these life-saving gifts.

Nearly 400 new blood donors are needed every day in England to meet demand.

75% of UK patients in need of a stem cell transplant are not able to find a match from a relative and need an unrelated donor.

Only around 40% of people in England have registered a decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register.



In particular, these donor types are needed:

- Blood, stem cell and organ donors from Black African, Black Caribbean and Asian backgrounds, as well as other minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Male blood and stem cell donors.
- Young blood, stem cell and organ donors.



THE LAW OPT IN? OPT OUT?

The law around organ donation in England has changed. All adults in England are now considered to have agreed to be an organ donor when they die unless they have recorded a decision not to donate or are in one of the excluded groups.

Opt out enquiries

0300 303 2094

ORGAN DONATION AND YOUR BELIEFS

Bahá'í

The Bahá'í faith teaches that a soul associates with a physical body in this life, in order for that individual to cultivate spiritual qualities and manifest their potential.

After death, the soul no longer has a connection with the body; thus, there is nothing in the Baha'i teachings which would forbid a Bahá'í to donate organs for transplantation.

Indeed, organ donation has been described in the Bahá'í teachings as being: Of “service to mankind in death” and: A “noble thing to do”.

Buddhism

There are no injunctions in Buddhism for or against organ donation. The death process of an individual is viewed as a very important time that should be treated with the greatest care and respect.

The needs and wishes of the dying person must not be compromised by the wish to save a life. Each decision will depend on individual circumstances.

Central to Buddhism is a wish to relieve suffering and there may be circumstances where organ donation may be seen as an act of generosity. Where it is truly the wish of the dying person, it would be seen in that light.

Christianity

The Christian faith is based upon the revelation of God in the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught people to love one another and embrace the needs of others.

- Christians consider organ donation an act of love and a way of following Jesus' example
- Christians believe in eternal life, and preparing for death should not be feared
- Christians believe that nothing that happens to our body, before or after death, can impact on our relationship with God.

Hinduism

There are many references that support organ donation in Hindu scriptures. Daan is the original word in Sanskrit for donation meaning selfless giving. It is also third in the list of the ten Niyamas (virtuous acts).

Life after death is a strong belief of Hindus and is an ongoing process of rebirth. The law of Karma decides which way the soul will go in the next life.

Humanism

As humanists do not believe in a continued existence after death or place an additional spiritual value upon the body, they do not object to allowing their organs to be used to help others after death, except for when an individual has expressed a personal wish to the contrary.



Islam

In Islam there are a number of fatawa (religious edicts) with regard to organ donation.

Islamic scholars and imams play an important role in providing guidance to members of the Muslim community on organ donation.

Over the last few years, NHS Blood and Transplant has been facilitating conversations within the Muslim community, bringing together Islamic scholars, imams, umbrella organisations and hospital based Muslim chaplains to discuss organ donation. There are a number of different viewpoints.

Over 100 fatawa (religious edicts) have been produced around the world about organ donation and three of these have been published in the UK. These rulings provide important guidance and context within Islamic law and help Muslims to make informed and personal decisions about organ donation.



Jainism

Jains believe that karma decides which way the soul will go in the next life, and that the soul and the body are two separate entities.

It is thought that the greatest thing one can do in this life is making the gift of life to help another person live a better life.

Organs are carefully removed after the donor has died and this has no effect on the soul or the new body it forms in its next birth.



Judaism

In principle Judaism sanctions and encourages organ donation in order to save lives (pikuach nefesh).

Whether or not the wishes of the dead person are known, it is widely recognised that families are entitled to decide for themselves; and that they will often wish to consult with their own experts in Jewish law and tradition before making a final decision.

Judaism holds that organs may not be removed from a donor until death can be confirmed. For some Jews, the diagnosis of death using neurological criteria (known as 'brain stem death') is acceptable. Other Jews will only agree to the removal of organs from a donor after the confirmation of death using circulatory criteria (once a person's heart has stopped).



Sikhism

The Sikh philosophy and teachings support the importance of giving and putting others before oneself. Seva (the act of selfless service, to give without seeking reward or recognition) is at the core of being a Sikh.

Seva can also be about donating your organ to another - Sikhism does not attach taboos to organ donation and transplantation and stresses that saving a human life is one of the noblest things you can do.

Sikhs also believe that your body does not need all its organs at or after death.



Yes I donate
ORGAN DONATION

TAKE TIME TO TALK ABOUT ORGAN DONATION

Take time to discuss your decision - whatever that may be - with your loved ones.

The important thing is to talk about it. Many people don't realise that their family's support is needed for organ donation to go ahead.



1 Try using a newspaper, TV story or social media post you've seen.



2 Explain how donating your organs and tissues will improve, or even save lives.



3 Tell them how you arrived at the decision to donate your organs.



Let's talk about it



ORGAN DONATION MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

MYTH: It's better to just let my family decide at the time.

FACT: If you want to become an organ or tissue donor – you need to tell your family.

- A main reason that families decline donation is because they simply don't know what their loved one wanted.
- 73 % of families that have prior knowledge of their loved one's willingness to donate say 'yes'. This increases to 90 % when the deceased is a registered donor.
- When the family is unaware of their loved one's donation decision, only 44 % of families agree to donation.

MYTH: Organ and tissue donation disfigures the body.

FACT: Organ donation is specialised surgery and does not disfigure the body.

- The surgical incision made during the procedure will be closed and covered as in any other operation and will not be visible beneath the person's clothes.
- The donor's body is always treated with dignity and respect and the family can still have an open casket viewing if desired.

MYTH: It's my choice – I don't need to discuss it with my family.

FACT: Your family needs to know. They will be asked to confirm your decision.

- Families play a crucial role in the donation process because they are asked to confirm the donation decision of their loved one.
- The family will be involved in each step of the donation process and be asked to provide vital health information – even if you have registered your decision.
- Most importantly you need to discuss your decision with your loved ones. Prepare your family so that they are comfortable being part of the process.

MYTH: If I am a registered donor, doctors won't try as hard to save my life.

FACT: The doctor's first priority is always to save your life.

- Saving your life is the absolute priority of medical staff – health staff, doctors and nurses work incredibly hard to save people's lives.
- Organ and tissue donation is only considered when the person has died or death is inevitable, at which time the UK Organ Donor Register is checked and the family is asked to confirm their loved one's donation decision.
- One organ and tissue donor can save and transform the lives of many.

NHS



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