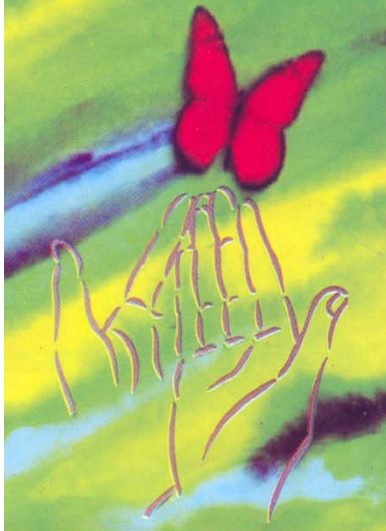




Give a Gift of Life



ORGAN DONATION A GIFT OF LIFE

Organ transplants are miraculous achievements of modern medicine which provide a viable approach to the management of diseases that cause end stage organ failure. They help such patients live long after they have given up hope but depend entirely on the generosity of donors and their families who are willing to give this life saving gift to others. Every year, hundreds of people die while waiting for an organ transplant. There is a serious shortage of organs and the gap between the numbers of organs donated and the number of people waiting is ever increasing. This is where you can help by pledging your organs.

Below are some commonly asked questions about organ donation:

1. Who can Donate ?

Any person regardless of age, race or gender can pledge to donate his or her organs by signing a donor card. If you are under 18 consent of parent or legal guardian is necessary. Alternatively, the family members of a brain dead person can offer the organs for donation. Medical suitability for donation is determined at the time of brain death of the individual.

2. What is brain death ?

Severe head injury, stroke, brain tumour or other serious illnesses cause irreversible brain damage with cessation of brain stem function and such a patient is termed brain dead. A brain dead person is medically and legally dead and cannot recover. With the help of artificial support like mechanical ventilation and drugs, the heart may continue to beat for a limited period of time but eventually it will stop functioning despite any medical support. Brain death is certified after specific tests are performed twice over an interval of six hours by a team of 4 doctors as per the guidelines issued by Govt of India in Transplantation of Human Organs act 1994.

3. Which organs can be donated ?

Medical science has succeeded in transplantation of many organs like heart, lungs, kidney, liver, pancreas and some tissues and bones, of which facilities for kidney, liver and cornea transplantation currently exist in Army Hospital (R&R).

4. Does donation leave the body disfigured ?

No. Organs are removed with greatest care and respect by a team of specially trained surgeons. This takes place in the operation theatre under aseptic conditions. After the removal of the organs the surgical incision is carefully and neatly stitched and a dressing is applied. Relatives may see the body after the operation if they wish. The process of organ removal does not interfere with the customary funeral or burial arrangements.

5. Will they just let you die if they know you want to be a donor ?

No. The doctors looking after a patient make every possible effort to save the patient's life. If despite efforts, the patient suffers brain death, only then can organ donation be considered and a completely different team of doctors is called in. The patient is already dead and the ventilator only keeps the body supplied with oxygen so that the heart can continue to beat and circulate blood to preserve the organs so they can be donated for transplantation.

6. What if my religious beliefs do not permit donation ?

There is no religion which prohibits organ donation. In fact, below are excerpts from some religious texts :

i) **HINDUISM** : ".....it is said that the soul is invisible, knowing this you should not grieve for the body." Daan is the act of selfless giving. -Bhagvad Gita, Chapter 2:25.

ii) **SIKHISM** : "The dead sustain their bond with the living through virtuous deeds". -Guru Nanak, Guru Granth Sahib, p 143.

iii) **ISLAM** : "Whosoever saves the life of one person would be as if he saved the life of all mankind." -Holy Quran, Chapter 5:32

iv) **CHRISTIANITY** : Sacrifice and helping other

are consistent themes in Christianity, which teaches the principle of seeking for others what you hope others would do for you. Teaching of Jesus Christ- "....Freely you have received, freely give." Mathew, Chapter 10:8

v) **BUDDHISM** : "Organ donation is an extremely positive action....it will not harm in any way the 'consciousness' that is leaving the body. On the contrary, this final act of generously accumulates good karma." Sogyal Rinpoche-The Tibetan Book of Living & Dying.

7. What does the law say about organ donation ?

Govt of India has passed the Transplantation of Human Organs act 1994 which legally permits organ donation.

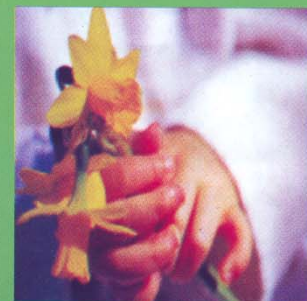
8. Is the family asked for permission for donation even if a signed donor card is found?

Yes. Therefore, it is important that you share your decision with your family members so that it is easier for them to carry out your wishes.

Organ donation ensures that you leave behind a legacy of life to others after you. Families of donors say that being asked about organ donation does not upset them or make the situation worse. By being asked, they are being offered a choice to save other lives in their moment of loss and grief. So pledge your organs for donation and help precious lives from being lost before their time.

Like wisps in the wind
faded autumn leaves blow
but long after they are gone
echoes of their whispers are heard
in the gentle breeze and colours of spring
-the gift of a new life

**Don't take your organs to heaven
for God knows we need them here**



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