How do I become a donor?

If you decide you would like to become a donor on your death, you need to join the NHS Organ Donor Register to ensure your wishes are recorded. Discuss your decision with those closest to you so that they are aware of your wishes. Adding your name to the register is simple and quick:

- You can register online at organdonation.nhs.uk
- Or call 0300 123 23 23

To find out more about organ and tissue donation, visit organdonation.nhs.uk

Organs and religious beliefs

A guide to organ donation and Muslim beliefs (Arabic)
Islam and organ donation

In Islam there are two schools of thought with regard to organ donation. The human body, whether living or dead, enjoys a special honour and is inviolable, and fundamentally, Islamic law emphasises the preservation of human life. The general rule that ‘necessitates permit the prohibited’ (al-darurat tubih al-mahzurat), has been used to support human organ donation with regard to saving or significantly enhancing a life of another provided that the benefit outweighs the personal cost that has to be borne. The following are some verses which have been used to support organ donation:

“Whosoever saves a life...”

Holy Qur’an, chapter 5, v. 32

“Whosoever helps another will be helped...”

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

If you happened to be ill and in need of a transplant, you certainly would wish that someone would help you by providing the needed organ.

Sheikh Dr MA Zaki Badawi, Principal, Muslim College, London

An alternative view clearly states that:

The saving of life is not absolute, but subject to the amount of cost that has to be borne. Therefore, although the above quotation enjoys the saving of life, it is not without restriction or caveats.

As permitted not to allow whatever the cost. Scholars, such as the Islamic Fiqh Academy of India, allow live donations only.

Mufti Mohammad Zubair Butt, Muslim Council of Britain

Therefore it is very clear that in Islam:

- Organ donation is a very personal choice and one should consider seeking the opinion of a scholar of their choosing.

- Mufti Mohammad Zubair Butt, Muslim Council of Britain

That said, one of the fundamental purposes of Islamic law is the preservation of life which is a gift from Allah and was given to those who save the life of others. To help in this matter the reader’s attention is drawn to the following life-saving Fatwa: In 1995, the UK-based Muslim Law (Shariah) Council resolved that:

- the medical profession is the proper authority to define signs of death
- current medical knowledge considers brain stem death to be a proper definition of death
- the Council accepts brain stem death as constituting the end of life for the purpose of organ transplantation
- the Council supports organ transplantation as a means of alleviating pain or saving life on the basis of the rules of the Shariah
- Muslims may carry donor cards
- the next of kin of a dead person, in the absence of a donor card or an expressed wish to donate their organs, may give their wish that someone would help you by providing the needed organ.

Therefore, although the above quotation enjoys the saving of life, it is not without restriction or caveats.

As permitted not to allow whatever the cost. Scholars, such as the Islamic Fiqh Academy of India, allow live donations only.

Mufti Mohammad Zabur Butt, Muslim Council of Britain

Islam and organ donation

Organ donation

Organ donation is the gift of an organ to help someone else who needs a transplant. Hundreds of people’s lives are saved or improved each year by organ transplants. Organ can be donated by people who have died include the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, pancreas and small bowel. Tissue such as skin, bone, heart valves and corneas can also be used to help others.

Donation is an individual choice and views differ even within the religious groups.

Why is it important to think about donating organs?

With medical advances it is now possible to use transplanted organs and tissues to enhance the life chances of those suffering from a range of terminal conditions such as renal, liver and heart failure. More people than before now suffer from these conditions and some ethnic groups seem to be more affected than others.

The person in need of an organ today may be a stranger, but tomorrow that person could be someone you know and love dearly. So please take the time to think about becoming an organ donor and discuss your thoughts with loved ones.

Consent

The consent or permission of those closest to the donor is always sought by those who save the life of others. People don’t have the right to refuse to donate their organs even if they are related to the injured person.

The removal of organs and tissues is carried out with the greatest care and respect. The family can see the body afterwards and staff can contact a chaplain or local religious leader if the family wishes.

When can organ donation take place?

Doctors and their colleagues are committed to doing everything possible to save life. Organs are only removed for transplantation after the patient has died and after death has been certified by doctors who are entirely independent of the transplant team.

Most donors in the UK come from people who die from a severe brain injury, and who are on a ventilator in an Intensive Care Unit. The brain injury will have damaged the vital centres in the brain which are essential to maintain life. Doctors call this ‘brain stem death’. This is the same as being in a coma or ‘persistent vegetative state’. Tests are carried out to strict guidelines to show conclusively when this has happened. When brain stem death is pronounced the patient may still be on a ventilator, and have a heart beat which continues to circulate blood around the body. This prevents the organs from losing the oxygen rich blood supply which is necessary for a healthier transplant outcome.

Organ donors can also be from people whose death has been certified because their heart has stopped. Certification of those ‘heart beating’ donors is also by doctors who are entirely independent of the transplant team.

Care and respect

The removal of organs and tissues is carried out with the greatest care and respect. The family can see the body afterwards and staff can contact a chaplain or local religious leader if the family wishes.

Christian view

The body is sacred, but it can be used for the greater good. The family can see the body afterwards and staff can contact a chaplain or local religious leader if the family wishes.

Islamic view

The body is sacred, but it can be used for the greater good. The family can see the body afterwards and staff can contact a chaplain or local religious leader if the family wishes.