

1. Why is organ donation important?

In India the current organ donation rate is 0.26 donors per million population as compared to more than 30 donors per million in some western countries. There is serious shortage of organs and the gap between the number of organs donated and the number of people waiting for transplant is ever increasing. This is where you can help by pledging to donate your organs.

2. Who can pledge to donate organs?

Any person aged 18 years or above can pledge to donate his or her organs after brain death by signing a donor card.

3. What is brain death?

Head injury, stroke, brain tumour or other serious illnesses may result in irreversible damage to the brain with cessation of brain stem function, even as the heart continues to beat for some time. Such a patient is termed brain dead. Even though the heart is beating, a brain dead person is medically and legally dead and cannot recover.

4. What organs can be donated?

A single brain dead donor can save several lives by donating the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas and small bowel.

5. Can organs be donated after normal death?

No. Once the heart stops beating the blood supply to vital organs is cut off and donation is not possible. However, several tissues like cornea, heart valves, eardrums, bones, menisci, tendons and skin continue to be viable for a few hours after normal death.

6. Does donation leave the body disfigured?

No. Organs are removed with the greatest care and dignity by a team of specially trained surgeons.

7. What does the law say about organ donation?

The Transplantation of Human Organs Act and Rules, as amended from time to time, recognize the concept of brain death and give legal sanction for diagnosis of brain death and deceased organ donation.

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

Yes. The donor card has no legal standing. Therefore, it is important that you share your decision with your family members so that it is easier for them to carry out your wish.

9. 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:

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.

SIKHISM: “The dead sustain their bond with the living through virtuous deeds”. -Guru Nanak, Guru Granth Sahib, p 143.

ISLAM: “Whosoever saves the life of one person would be as if he saved the life of all mankind”. - Holy Quran, chapter 5:32.

CHRISTIANITY: Sacrifice and helping others 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.