

would not appear disfigured, nor would the procedure obstruct the customary funeral arrangements, as many people suspect.

Organs that can be transplanted

Organ donation and transplantation are among the most remarkable advances made by the Medical Science during the century. Eyes (corneas), Kidneys, liver, lungs, heart and pancreas are among the organs that can be transplanted. A living donor can donate one of his two kidneys (since one kidney is enough for a person to lead a normal life), a portion of the pancreas (since half of the pancreas is sufficient for performing its routine functions), and part of the liver (as both segments of the organ would regenerate and grow back to the original capacity over a period of time). Other tissues like skin, bone, cartilages, veins, arteries, heart valves, bone marrow etc. can also be transplanted, which can be done only in hospitals with very advanced facilities.

Organs are required in the Earth, not Heaven

When a person dies and his/her body gets cremated, all these vital organs that could have given a new life to many, also perish. While these organs are not of any use to the dead person anymore, they can save the lives of many others, through the right decision-making, pre-planning and timely action.

Organs are the most valuable legacy one can leave behind. The donated eyes continue to see the world even after the donor is gone, and other donated organs help save the lives of many.

For more information please contact:

1. The Kerala Network for Organ Sharing (KNOS), initiated by the Health Department, Government of Kerala, provides valuable information, support and assistance in the fields of organ donation and transplantation. The KNOS can be contacted through the website www.knos.org.in
2. The Kidney Federation of India was established in 2009 to provide support to end-stage renal patients, and create awareness among the public on organ donation. The KFI can be contacted at the following address.



KIDNEY FEDERATION OF INDIA

1st Floor, Pallithamam Shopping Complex,
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Tel: 0487 2322999, 2323888, 2320302
Email: kidneyfederationofindia@gmail.com,
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www.frdavischiramel.com



Mrithasanjeevani

A ray of hope
for those in desperate need of help.

Life is the most precious gift on Earth. Sadly, many lives are lost around us every day due to failure of vital organs, and non-availability of organs for transplantation. In spite of the remarkable advances made by Medical Science in the fields of Transplant Immunology, Surgical Management and Organ Preservation, shortage of organs for transplantation continues to be a major issue.



Organ donation and transplantation

Transplantation is the act of surgically removing one or more organs from the body of a living or brain-dead person and implanting the same in the body of a patient with end-stage organ failure, thereby granting the patient a second chance to live and considerably improve the quality of living.

Who can donate organs?

Donors can be of two types (i) Living persons who decide to donate organs to patients with end-stage organ failure - related or otherwise and (ii) Brain-dead patients.

In the case of live donors, there are no hard and fast rules regarding the age. Anybody

who fulfils the required medical standards can be a potential donor. Except in the case of eyes, for all other vital organs the blood groups of the patient and donor have to match, which has to be followed by a thorough cross-matching procedure.

Those who have consented for organ donation during their lifetime have to document the same, and make their close relatives aware of their wish, so that the same can be fulfilled after their death. Even in the presence of a consent, the person legally in possession of the dead body (the closest relative like a spouse, parent or offspring) has to give the consent for organ donation after brain death. The donor card and the signed consent form reflect the person's wish and may help in motivating the near relatives also, for organ donation.

Cadaver organ donation

It means donation of organs after death. In natural death (where the heart has stopped beating), under normal circumstances, eyes are the only organs that can be donated. Ideally, eyes have to be taken from the dead person within 6 hours of death. In case the death has occurred at home, or in a hospital where facility to remove and preserve the eyes is not available, a team of surgeons will come from a hospital with the facility and perform the act. There is no need to move the dead person's body anywhere.

In the case of a brain-dead donor, vital organs like kidney, liver, heart, lungs etc. can also be donated.

Brain-death

Brain-death is the irreversible and permanent cessation of all brain functions. When the blood and oxygen flow to a patient's brain has ceased and the brain is no longer functioning in any capacity and never will again, the patient is termed as brain-dead. It usually occurs due to severe brain injury, brain hemorrhage etc. In such cases, other vital organs like heart, liver, kidney etc. may continue to function till the life-supporting machines are removed. In short, brain-death can occur only when the patient is connected to the ventilator. Unless the organs have been damaged by disease or injury, they can be used for transplant to one or more end-stage patients and their lives can be saved.

Hospitals follow strictly laid out procedures and tests to confirm brain death. Once declared brain-dead, further artificial support is futile, since the patient is never going to return to life. It is nothing but emotional and financial trauma for the patient's family. It is the precise time at which the vital decision on organ donation has to be taken, since organs have to be transplanted from the donor to the patient as soon as possible after brain-death.

In many countries, transplantation of organs from brain-dead patients is a routine part of medical treatment. In India, the same has been defined and legalized by the Transplantation of Human Organs Act - 1994.

When organs are removed from a person who has suffered natural or brain death, his body wouldn't show any visible indication the act,