

Answers to frequently asked questions

Organ and tissue donation



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Answers to frequently asked questions

Organ and tissue donation

Contents

| Get informed

What is a transplant?	6
Which organs and tissue can I donate?	6
How successful are transplants?	6
How great is the need for donor organs and tissue?	8
What happens when donated organs and tissue are removed and transplanted after death?	10
How are the recipients of the donor organs and tissue selected?	13
What is the irreversible loss of all functions of the brain (brain death) and how is it determined?	14
What does the transplant register record?	17
Are the regulations concerning organ and tissue donation the same in all countries of the European Union?	18
Is my organ donor card valid in other countries?	20
How are the measures related to organ and tissue transplants financed?	20
Is the trade of organs and tissue prohibited in Germany?	21
Can I donate organs or tissue while I'm alive?	23
If I have agreed to be an organ and tissue donor while I'm alive, will the doctors really do everything they can to save my life if they have to?	24

| Make a decision

Why should I make a decision?	28
Up to what age can I donate organs and tissue?	28
Can we say goodbye to the deceased loved one once the organs or tissue have been removed?	29
Is the donation of organs or tissue painful?	29
Does the recipient of an organ or tissue find out who donated the organ or tissue?	30
Who can I talk to about the subject of donating organs and tissue?	30
Are donated organs and tissue used for scientific or commercial purposes? ..	31
Can I influence who will receive my organs and tissue?	32

| Document it

How can I record my decision to be an organ and tissue donor?	36
Can I change my decision to be or not to be an organ and tissue donor?	37
What are the declaration options?	37
Where can I obtain an organ donor card?	38
Can minors also make an organ and tissue donation declaration?	39
I do not have German citizenship. What relevance does an organ donor card have to me?	42
I have a pre-existing condition. Can I still donate organs and tissue when I die?	42
What does an advance decision (living will) control and how can I make sure it records my decision to be an organ and tissue donor?	43
Can I also record my decision concerning organ and tissue donation in my will?	43

Publishing information	49
-------------------------------------	----

Get informed

Which organs and tissue can be donated? How is the donation of organs and tissue regulated under German law? And what is the process for organ and tissue donation? Information concerning key aspects of organ and tissue donation enables you to make your own personal decision on whether or not you would like to be an organ and tissue donor.

What is a transplant?

A transplant (from the Latin *transplantare* = trans- 'across' + plantare 'to plant') is the process of implanting fully functioning organs and tissue in the body of a seriously ill or impaired person. The aim of organ and tissue transplantation is to replace the failing organs and tissue in a patient.

Which organs and tissue can I donate?

Various organs and tissue can be donated.

Organ donation

The kidneys, liver, heart, lungs, pancreas and intestine can be donated after death.

Tissue donation

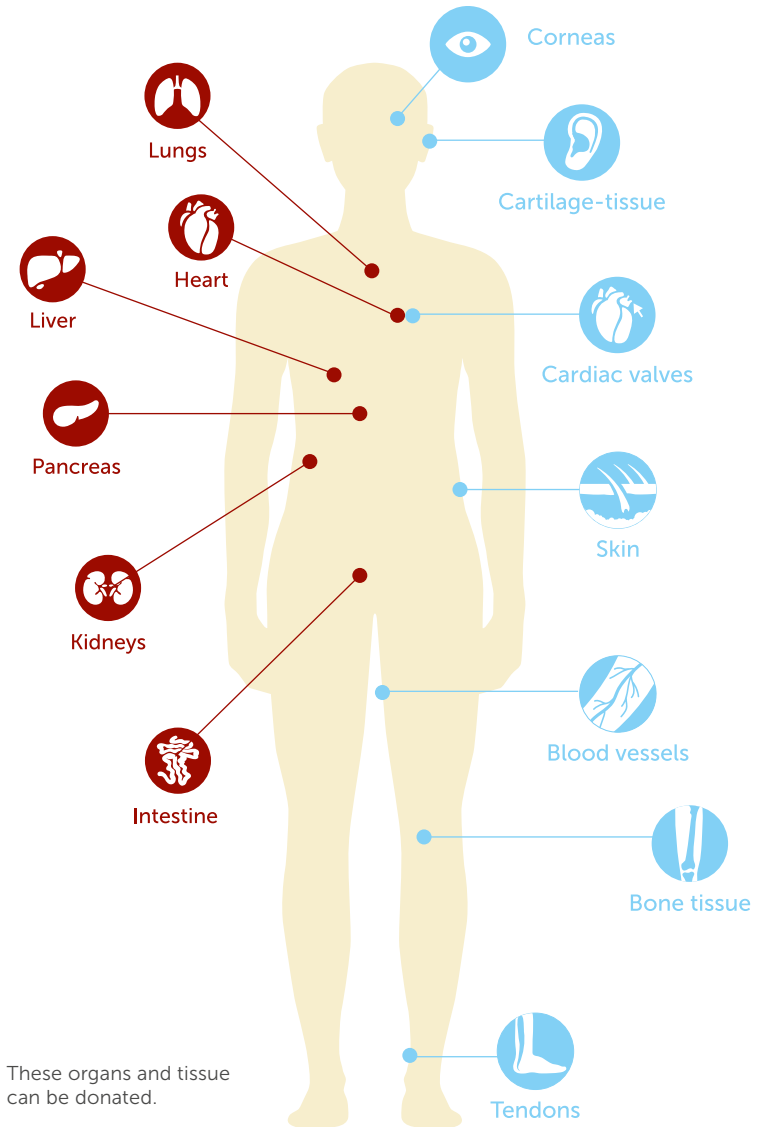
Skin, corneas and cardiac valves, as well as parts of blood vessels, parts of bone tissue and parts of tendons can also be donated.

How successful are transplants?

The success of an organ or tissue transplant depends on many factors.

Organ donation

The length of time that a transplanted organ is able to function varies from case to case. In addition to organ quality, the overall health condition of the recipient also plays a role. Possible rejection by the recipient's body and the adjustment of the recipient's lifestyle also matter. Up to around 88 percent of



donated kidneys are still functioning after one year. After five years, around 75 percent are still functioning.¹ For heart, liver, lung and pancreas transplants, these figures are only slightly lower.² Donor kidneys and livers from living donors have a slightly longer functional life on average.

■ Tissue donation

The success of tissue transplants vary depending on the type of tissue. Cornea transplants have very high success rates, for example: since the cornea is not supplied with blood, the recipient's immune system does not usually reject the donated cornea. Cardiac valve transplants also have high success rates: more than 90 percent of patients who have received a transplant do not need a new transplant within 15 years.³ However, the success of tissue transplants is also subject to certain influential factors, such as recipients who have primary diseases.

■ How great is the need for donor organs and tissue?

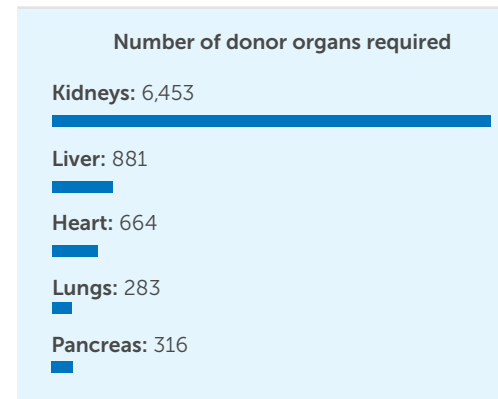
In Germany, there are currently about 8,500 patients waiting for a donor organ.⁴ The attending transplant centre reports their status to Eurotransplant (see page 12). Eurotransplant uses these notifications to maintain waiting lists for all organs. There are no equivalent central waiting lists for tissue.

■ Organ donation

The demand for organs is considerably greater than the number of organs donated. Accordingly, the waiting times for an organ transplant are long: patients wait over eight years⁵ on average to receive a donor kidney, for example.

■ Tissue donation

In Germany, the supply of tissue preparations is always tailored to suit the demand. The preparations required can mostly be transplanted without a notable delay in time. However, waiting times can occur locally and regionally, especially for corneas, cardiac valves and blood vessels. Yet these bottlenecks can also be regularly overcome in good time through cooperations of different tissue banks in Germany and via imports from abroad.



Number of organs to be allocated for the patients included on a waiting list at Eurotransplant

Source:
Eurotransplant,
monthly statistics,
July 2023

¹ Collaborative Transplant Study K-11101E-0223.

² Collaborative Transplant Study H-11101E-0223; L-11101E-0223; P-11101E-0223.

³ Sievers H.-H., Stierle U, Charitos E. I., Takkenberg J. J. M., Hörer J., Lange R. et al.: A multicentre evaluation of the autograft procedure for young patients undergoing aortic valve replacement: update on the German Ross Registry. In: Eur J Cardiothorac Surg 2016 Jan.; 49(1).

⁴ Eurotransplant, dated 01.01.2023, 8,505 patients.

⁵ Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Healthcare (IQWiG) reports – no. 904, 2020.

What happens when donated organs and tissue are removed and transplanted after death?

The donation of organs and tissue is subject to clearly defined rules: the death of the donor must be confirmed beyond doubt. Before organs can be donated, the irreversible loss of all functions of the brain (brain death) of the donor must be independently confirmed by two doctors. This confirmation is made in accordance with the guidelines of the German Medical Association (Bundesärztekammer) (see page 18) for the rules for determining death and the procedural rules for determining the final, irreversible loss of all functions of the cerebrum, the cerebellum and the brainstem. For tissue donation, death can also be determined by a doctor if the final, irreversible arrest of the heart and circulation has occurred and more than three hours have passed since that moment. In the event that the donor has provided their consent, death has been confirmed and there are no medical grounds against the donation, organs and tissue can be removed. In principle, organ donation always takes priority over tissue donation.

■ Organ donation

If a patient is considered to be a possible organ donor following medical assessment, the hospital will let the German Organ Procurement Organisation (Deutsche Stiftung Organtransplantation – DSO) know without delay (see page 14). When organ donation consent exists, the DSO arranges the lab tests and medical tests necessary for the protection of the organ recipient. The DSO then informs the central agency Eurotransplant in the Netherlands about the organ donor (see page 12). Eurotransplant's system then determines suitable recipients for the available organs. Organs are removed by

surgeons in an operating theatre with the same surgical care as is applied when operating on patients who are alive. Removed organs are transported to the corresponding transplant centre as quickly as possible and the transplant takes place there.

■ Tissue donation

When all the requirements have been met for the removal of tissue, the respective tissue bank concerned is informed. This tissue bank may be internal to the hospital or an external, independent tissue bank that the hospital works with. Tissue can be removed by the tissue bank or an authorised removal facility up to 72 hours after death has been confirmed by medical personnel in an operating theatre or a pathology lab. The removed tissue then undergoes medical examination, preparation and conservation. In contrast to organs, which are transplanted directly, donor tissue is usually stored first until it is needed for transplant.

Eurotransplant

The allocation of the few deceased donor organs available is determined based on the large number of possible recipients on the waiting list, in particular with reference to chances of success and level of urgency. Eurotransplant is the facilitating organisation pursuant to Paragraph 12 of the German Transplantation Act (Transplantationsgesetz) for deceased donor organs to be allocated (heart, kidneys, liver, lungs, pancreas and intestine). It works on behalf of many organisations, including the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds (Spitzenverband Bund der Krankenkassen), the German Hospital Federation (Deutsche Krankenhausgesellschaft) and the German Medical Association. Its registered office is in the Netherlands. Eurotransplant facilitates the international exchange of organs for the following countries: Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary. Eurotransplant records all the necessary data of possible organ recipients needed for the successful allocation and transplant of an organ. When a donor becomes available, Eurotransplant's system compares the donor's data with the data of the patients on the waiting list and produces an individual match list of potential recipients for each organ. The better an organ matches with its recipient, the better the prospects of a successful transplant.

How are the recipients of the donor organs and tissue selected?

Different criteria come into play in the allocation of organs and tissue. To keep the probability of the transplant being rejected to a minimum, it is crucial that organs and tissue are as good a match as possible for their recipients. This requires the careful comparison of the donor's medical data with that of the patient needing the organ or tissue.

■ Organ donation

Allocation is determined by the central Eurotransplant network (see page 12) according to the rules specified in the German Medical Association guidelines (see page 18). The prospects of success and the level of urgency of an organ transplant are vital to the selection of a recipient. The length of time a patient has already spent on the waiting list is also taken into account. Social criteria such as the insurance status or income are not considered at all. Eurotransplant uses different sets of information to determine which patients are a match for a specific donor organ, including blood group, body height, age and weight of the donor and the recipient.

■ Tissue donation

Clinics and attending doctors contact tissue banks to request specific transplants for their patients that can mostly be supplied directly or without delay. Some tissue types require a match between the blood groups or tissue characteristics of the donor and the recipient.

German Organ Procurement Organisation (Deutsche Stiftung Organtransplantation – DSO)

Pursuant to Paragraph 11 of the German Transplantation Act, the DSO is responsible for coordinating deceased organ donation in Germany. It organises and coordinates all medical and organisational steps involved in an organ donation procedure: from donor supervision and organ removal and conservation to the transportation of organs. It works together closely with organ removal hospitals, in particular with the transplant representatives. The DSO is commissioned by the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds (Spitzenverband Bund der Krankenkassen), the German Hospital Federation (Deutsche Krankenhausgesellschaft) and the German Medical Association.

the course of the disease. If brain death is suspected, two experienced doctors independently carry out the diagnosis of irreversible loss of all functions of the brain (brain death diagnosis) in accordance with the German Medical Association guidelines (see page 18) for the rules for determining the final, irreversible loss of all functions of the cerebrum, the cerebellum and the brainstem. These guidelines set out the precise procedure to follow for these clinical and machine-aided examinations. They cover both the determination of the loss of all functions of the brain and the determination of the irreversible nature of this loss. The aim of these examinations is to assess the health condition of a person. If the diagnosis is brain death, then the person is dead beyond doubt.

What is the irreversible loss of all functions of the brain (brain death) and how is it determined?

Brain death is defined as the final irreversible loss of all functions of the cerebrum, cerebellum and the brainstem. It can only be determined in hospital intensive care while the patient's organs are kept alive via artificial ventilation and the circulatory system is maintained. The irreversible loss of all functions of the brain (brain death) cannot, however, be determined at the scene of an accident, for example. Examinations to see if brain death has occurred are usually carried out if the diagnostic findings in a patient with serious brain damage deteriorate throughout

Brochure: "The irreversible loss of all functions of the brain (brain death)"



Brochure with brief information on the most important questions about brain death. Only available in German.
Order number: [60130002](#)

Order here: Postal address: BZgA, 50819 Cologne, Germany,
Fax: 0221 8992-257, E-mail: bestellung@bzga.de.
Internet: <https://shop.bzga.de/der-unumkehrbare-ausfall-der-gesamten-hirnfunktionen-hirntod-60130002/>.

German Transplantation Act (Transplantationsgesetz)

Since 1997, the German Transplantation Act has provided a legal basis to ensure transplant medicine is transparent and to prevent malpractice. The Act governs the donation, removal and transfer of human organs and tissue and the prohibition of commercial organ trade. The salient points of the German Transplantation Act include:

- the organisation and individual separation of the areas of donation, allocation and transplant,
- the requirements for organ and tissue donation (Paragraph 3), including consent thereto
- what is known as informed consent (Paragraph 2), where citizens have already made the decision to become an organ and/or tissue donor when they were alive,
- provisions for living organ or tissue donation (Paragraph 8).

Since 2013, manipulations of patient data by the German Transplantation Act have been penalised. Likewise, all new guidelines prepared by the German Medical Association and all changes to existing guidelines must be submitted to the German Federal Ministry of Health for approval.

These changes are intended to prevent manipulations of organ allocation.

What does the transplant register record?

A transplant register has been established to improve and develop the supply of transplant medical care and to increase transparency surrounding organ donation in Germany. This register records data collected during organ donation, organ transplant and the after-care of transplant recipients and living donors.

If you have declared while alive your willingness to be an organ donor upon your death or your relatives have agreed to organ removal (if you had not made a declaration), your relevant medical data is transferred to the register in the event of organ donation. The register matches your data with the relevant medical data of organ recipients so it can then provide substantiated information concerning which donor organ would be best suited to which organ recipient. Your data is pseudonymised before being transferred to the register, which means it is strictly encrypted and does not include any identifiable characteristics, such as name or address. Data concerning tissue donation and tissue transplants is not included in the transplant register. It also does not include whether you have opted for or against organ and tissue donation after your death.

Guidelines of the German Medical Association (Bundesärztekammer)

In Paragraph 16 of the German Transplantation Act, legislators engaged the German Medical Association to define the state of the art of medical science in guidelines for transplant medicine. These guidelines include rules on the acceptance onto the waiting lists and on organ allocation. There is also a German Medical Association guideline with rules on the determination of death and the procedure for determining the irreversible loss of all functions of the brain (brain death).

Express consent

The deceased person must already have consented while alive to organ and tissue donation after death. Absolute express consent does not exist within the Eurotransplant network.

Extended express consent

If there is no documentation concerning the decision of the deceased person, the next of kin or authorised representatives will be asked in the event of death to decide on organ and tissue donation from the deceased person.

Informed consent

This particular form of extended express consent applies in Germany. An informed and deliberate decision is to be made while alive by ensuring citizens receive regular information about it. Once their insured persons have reached the age of 16, the health insurance funds provide them with information about organ and tissue donation once they have been issued with an electronic health card. The insured persons of private health insurance companies receive information concerning organ and tissue donation every five years after their 16th birthday, at the same time as their contribution statement. Information material and tips on advisory possibilities can also be obtained when applying for, extending or collecting identity cards, for example.

Are the regulations concerning organ and tissue donation the same in all countries of the European Union?

Each country may define the rules for organ and tissue donation in their own legislation. Some of the countries also have different statutory regulations concerning organ and tissue donation within the Eurotransplant network (see page 12). The following statutory regulations exist:

Presumed consent (opt-out system)

This means that organ donor consent is always assumed to have been given by the deceased person. However, there is the option to refuse consent to organ and tissue donation while alive.

■ Is my organ donor card valid in other countries?

In principle, the statutory regulations in the respective country of residence always apply. In the event of death, the next of kin are usually asked about the assumed wish of the deceased person. Above all, it is helpful to fill out and carry an organ donor card (preferably also in the language of the country of residence) with you and also to inform your loved ones of your decision regarding organ and tissue donation while still alive. The Federal Centre for Health Education (Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung – BZgA) provides a leaflet on the organ donor card in all official EU languages, as well as in Russian and Arabic, available for printing.

■ How are the measures related to organ and tissue transplants financed?

Like any operation, the transfer of organs and tissue incurs costs. However, the relatives of the donor do not incur any costs as a result of organ and tissue donation, as the competent authorities cover all costs incurred in organ or tissue donation.

■ Organ donation

Costs are incurred from organ removal, for example, from the transport to the transplant centre where the organ will be transferred and during the transplant itself. The German Organ Procurement Organisation (see page 14) reimburses the hospitals for the costs incurred during donation in line with defined flat rates. These flat rates are agreed on an annual basis

between the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds (Spitzenverband Bund der Krankenkassen), the German Hospital Federation (Deutsche Krankenhausgesellschaft), the German Medical Association and the German Organ Procurement Organisation. Transplant costs are borne by the statutory health fund or the private health insurance company of the organ recipient. For living donations, the costs for the necessary preliminary investigations, organ removal and organ transplant, as well as the after-care, are usually borne by the statutory health insurance fund or private health insurance company of the recipient. You should talk to your health insurance provider before a scheduled living donation as each donor-recipient case can differ.

■ Tissue donation

Tissue donation incurs costs for the removal and transplant of the tissue, as well as costs for the preparation, processing and storage of the preparations. The recipient's health insurance usually covers the costs of tissue donation and transplant. Reimbursement is usually made as a case-based lump sum.

■ Is the trade of organs and tissue prohibited in Germany?

The trade of organs and tissue is prohibited in Germany and is punishable by a prison sentence of up to five years or a fine, depending on the severity of the matter.

■ Organ donation

If anyone removes or transfers organs, or arranges the transfer thereof, in violation of the provisions of the German Transplantation Act (see page 16), they are liable to prosecution. Taking part in commercial organ trade abroad is a criminal offence and is punishable under the applicable law in Germany.

■ Tissue donation

For both deceased tissue donation and living donation, the removal facility and tissue bank always receive appropriate remuneration for the necessary activities in relation to the removal, handling, processing and conservation of the tissue. These activities and the remuneration for them do not fall under the trade prohibition as they can only be used to facilitate the treatment of patients with tissue donation. Traditional tissue preparations, such as corneas or cardiac valves, may not be traded. Other removed tissue may also be prepared for the production of medication and active ingredients. In these cases, these tissue preparations might be used in industrial processes or new handling or processing procedures, or irradiated tissue preparations. After approval by the Paul Ehrlich Institute (PEI) or registration with the PEI, these tissue preparations may be marketed in the same way as other medication, unless they are already exempted from the approval and registration obligation by legal regulation, and are therefore not subject to the trade prohibition.

■ Can I donate organs or tissue while I'm alive?

In Germany, strict legal provisions govern the donation of certain organs and tissue while the donor is living.

■ Organ donation

It is in principle possible to be a living donor of certain organs in Germany, under strict conditions. The German Transplantation Act (see page 16) sets out the requirements for living organ donation in Paragraph 8. This law is used to protect donors and is intended to help prevent organ trade. In order to rule out malpractice, a committee (known as the living donor committee) reviews every scheduled living organ donation in accordance with the law of the respective federal state. It reviews whether the donation is happening voluntarily and without financial motive. The German Transplantation Act only allows the living donation of organs between family members and people sharing a particularly personal connection. Living donation should always be considered thoroughly. Possible long-term consequences of living organ donation have not yet been comprehensively researched due to a lack of sufficient data. In Germany, living donors have almost exclusively involved only a kidney or parts of the liver. In very rare cases, it has also been possible for a living donor to donate a part of a lung or the pancreas.

■ Tissue donation

Tissue that can be included in living donations mainly involves the head of the femur, which is removed during certain hip joint operations. Some amniotic fluid (amnion) can also be donated while alive after the birth. The tissue is prepared and processed before it is used in a sick person. The living tissue donation, in contrast to a living organ donation, is not usually matched with a particular person.

If I have agreed to be an organ and tissue donor while I'm alive, will the doctors really do everything they can to save my life if they have to?

The attending doctors are under an obligation to care for the patient. It is therefore the aim of all medical measures to save the life of the patient. A possible (documented) wish to donate organs and/or tissue does not play any role in this.

Make a decision

There is no right or wrong when it comes to deciding whether or not to consent to organ and tissue donation. Make this decision for yourself. Nobody has the right to judge your decision. Make your decision to suit you and you alone!

■ Why should I make a decision?

Making the decision while you are alive will ensure that your wish will be carried out in the event of your death. If you do not make a decision about this or do not document it, your next of kin will be asked to make a decision for or against organ and tissue donation on your behalf. Being forced to make this decision is a huge burden for them to deal with after just having lost someone they loved. If instead you document your decision and inform your loved ones of it while you are alive, this makes it easier for all concerned to carry out your wishes.

■ Up to what age can I donate organs and tissue?

There is no fixed age limit either for organ donation or for tissue donation. When an organ or tissue is being considered for transplant, each case is individually assessed by the medical teams. What matters is not the age of the donor, but the biological condition of the organs and tissue.

■ Organ donation

The younger the deceased person is, the more suitable organs there usually are for transplant. However, a functioning kidney from an over 70-year-old deceased person can still give someone else the gift of a virtually normal life.

■ Tissue donation

In principle, there is also no age limit for tissue donation. However, the donation of skin, tendons, connective tissue and other soft tissue is usually only possible up to the age of 65 or 75, depending on the tissue.

■ Can we say goodbye to the deceased loved one once the organs or tissue have been removed?

Yes. Organs and tissue are removed with the same level of surgical care as a standard operation. The German Transplantation Act (see page 16) stipulates that the dignity of the donor must be upheld throughout all measures in connection with organ and tissue removal. The operation wound is closed up after the removal and the body is cleaned. The relatives can say goodbye to the deceased person. The corpse is transferred in a dignified state for funeral purposes.

■ Is the donation of organs or tissue painful?

No. Organs and tissue are only removed once the person is dead and this has been confirmed beyond doubt. Once a person has died, all forms of perception and awareness cease to exist, including the ability to feel pain.

Does the recipient of an organ or tissue find out who donated the organ or tissue?

No, the name of the donor is not shared with the recipient. This also applies in reverse: the relatives of the donor also do not find out who the donated organ or tissue goes to. This anonymity prevents unwanted mutual dependencies, which can be stressful for all concerned.

■ Organ donation

On request, the transplant centre can inform the relatives if the transplant has been successful.

■ Tissue donation

On request, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Gewebetransplantation (DGFG) can inform the relatives of the deceased person whether the donation has been a success. Since tissue banks are not centrally organised, the regulations at each tissue bank may differ. It is also not possible to combine the data of the donor-recipient pair for data protection reasons.

Who can I talk to about the subject of donating organs and tissue?

Basically, with anyone you feel comfortable talking to about this. Above all, it is important that you talk about your wishes with your family so that they are informed in the event of your death. Family doctors also offer advice on organ and tissue donation. You can of course also talk to friends or your nearest transplant centre.

■ Organ donation

The Organ Donation Hotline team from the Federal Centre for Health Education (Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung – BZgA) is available Mondays to Fridays from 9am to 6pm on freephone 0800 90 40 400. The team also answers queries by e-mail: organspende@bzga.de. Support groups and groups of those who have experienced organ transplants are also a good place to go for information about the subject of organ donation in particular. You can find contact information at: www.organspende-info.de → [Über uns](#) → [Weitere Ansprechpersonen](#).

■ Tissue donation

If you have any questions about tissue donation, you can also contact the Organ Donation Hotline and the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) directly. Tissue banks and facilities, such as the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Gewebetransplantation (DGFG) network, have information on their websites about tissue donation options.

Are donated organs and tissue used for scientific or commercial purposes?

The transfer of donated organs and tissue is always based on the treatment of the patient in need.

■ Organ donation

No. Donated organs are not used for commercial or generally scientific purposes. They are instead used for the medical treatment of sick people. Provided that the organs are eligible for medical use, they are transferred to a seriously ill person to treat their illness or to relieve their medical condition.

■ Tissue donation

Tissue donation is also to be viewed as selfless in principle. However, tissue can also be marketed as tissue preparations for medical products. Tissue organisations, such as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Gewebetransplantation (DGFG) or the Deutsche Institut für Zell- und Gewebeersatz (DIZG), forward tissue preparations to clinics and doctors specifically only for the purpose of treatment. If you would like to ensure that your donated tissue is only used for treatment purposes, you can indicate this on your organ donor card in the space marked "Space for notes/additional information".

■ Can I influence who will receive my organs and tissue?

No. When you consent to organ and tissue donation after your death, you cannot specify to whom your organs or tissue are allocated. You also cannot restrict your willingness to donate to groups of people or exclude certain groups of people.

Document it

Document your decision on an organ donor card or in an advance healthcare directive (living will). Also talk to your family or other loved ones about it. In the worst case, action can be taken in your interest.



How can I record my decision to be an organ and tissue donor?

The organ donor card is a way to document your own decision regarding organ and tissue donation. It is helpful to always carry your organ donor card with your personal documents. Please also inform your family or loved ones about your decision. Tell them where you keep your donor card. You can also document your decision in an advance healthcare directive (living will). Then tell your loved ones where you keep the advance healthcare directive (living will).

In future, an organ donation register will also provide an opportunity to document decisions on organ and tissue donation online. The Organ Donation Register is currently under construction.

Can I change my decision to be or not to be an organ and tissue donor?

Yes, at any time. If you have documented your decision on an organ donor card and would like to change it, you can simply destroy your previous organ donor card.

You should then document your changed decision on a new organ donor card. It makes sense to always inform your family or other confidants about your changed decision. If you have an advance healthcare directive (living will), please check if you need to change it to match the information on your organ donor card.

What are the declaration options?

You have the following declaration options in both the organ donation register and the organ donor card:

- Unlimited consent to the removal of organs and tissue
- Removal restricted to certain organs and/or tissue
- Exclusion of certain organs and/or tissue from removal
- Objection to the removal of organs and tissue
- Transfer of the decision to another person

Where can I obtain an organ donor card?

Download your organ donor card from www.organspende-info.de. You can also request your organ donor card from the Federal Centre for Health Education (Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung – BZgA), see below. Health insurance funds and private health insurance companies furnish their insured persons with an organ donor card, and you can also obtain an organ donor card from many pharmacies, hospitals, residents' registration offices and doctors' practices. Once you have printed it out and filled it out, you can easily carry it with you in your wallet.

The image and instructions on pages 40 and 41 show you how to record your decision on an organ donor card.



Organ donor card as plastic card, the size of a credit card

An image of an organ donor card form. The top part is orange and white with the text 'Organ Donor Card' and 'Organ Spendende'. Below that, there are several sections with radio buttons for selection. The first section asks if the person gives permission for organs and tissues to be taken from their body after death. The second section asks if they give permission for the use of organs and tissues, except for fertility. The third section asks if they give permission for the use of organs and tissues. The fourth section asks if they are sure with organs or tissues to be taken from their body. There are also fields for 'Last name, first name', 'Date of birth', 'Place of birth', and 'Signature'.

You can order an organ donor card free of charge from the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA). Order number: [60285028](tel:60285028).

You can use the following channels: Post: BZgA, 50819 Cologne, Germany, Fax: 0221 8992-257, E-mail: bestellung@bzga.de.

You can also order the card online at:

<https://shop.bzga.de/organspendeausweis-als-plastikkarte/>.

Can minors also make an organ and tissue donation declaration?

From the age of 14, organ or tissue donation can be refused in the event of death – without the consent of a legal guardian. From the age of 16, any person can decide independently whether they would like to consent to or object to an organ and tissue donation after they die. The declaration on organ and tissue donation can be documented accordingly in an organ donor card or in any other written form.

- 1 If you select this option, you consent to the removal of any organs or tissue, without limit.
- 2 If you select this option, you would like to exclude certain organs and/or tissue from removal. Please specify these organs/tissue.
- 3 This is where you limit the removal to specific organs and/or tissue. Please specify these organs/tissue.
- 4 If you refuse to donate any organs and/or tissue, select this option.



- 5 If you select this option, you transfer the decision regarding the removal of organs and/or tissue to another person by entering their name and contact details here. Please make sure you notify that person about this.
- 6 This is where you enter your name, your date of birth and your address.
- 7 Enter the date and sign your card here.

Organ donor card

At the end of this brochure, you will find an organ donor card for you to cut out.



Do you need assistance in completing the organ donor card?



I do not have German citizenship. What relevance does an organ donor card have to me?

In Germany, you can decide to consent to or refuse organ and tissue donation according to the applicable law or to transfer the decision to another person. Irrespective of citizenship, the organ donor card offers everyone the chance to document their personal decision regarding organ and tissue donation.

I have a pre-existing condition. Can I still donate organs and tissue when I die?

There are only a few illnesses that exclude organ and tissue donation upon death as standard practice. If you are aware of any pre-existing conditions, you should enter these in the part of the organ donor card marked "Space for notes/additional information". The doctors will always decide in each case if an organ or tissue is suitable for donation.

■ Organ donation

In the case of certain contagious infectious diseases and malignant illnesses, organ donation is essentially excluded.

■ Tissue donation

Reasons for excluding tissue donation mainly include an unclear cause of death, various malignant illnesses and the risk of disease transmission, such as through infectious diseases.

What does an advance decision (living will) control and how can I make sure it records my decision to be an organ and tissue donor?

You can use an advance decision to set out whether and how you would like to be medically treated in certain situations in the event that you are unable to make those decisions yourself. In this case you need to be aware that deceased organ removal is only possible if intensive medical, organ-protecting measures using artificial ventilation can be applied without restriction beforehand.

On pages 44 to 47, you will see examples of text wording that can be used for an organ donation declaration in an advance decision. If you follow these examples, you will ensure that your wishes are documented clearly for doctors and that there is no contradiction between the treatment definition set out in the advance decision and an organ donation declaration on an organ donor card, for example.

Can I also record my decision concerning organ and tissue donation in my will?

No. A declaration concerning your willingness to donate organs or tissue in your will is futile, because your will is opened some time after your death. At that time, it is too late to consider any of your organs or tissue for donation.

Organ and tissue donation consent

I am aware that organs can only be removed once the irreversible loss of all functions of the brain (brain death) has been certified while my circulatory system is maintained and my organs are kept alive using artificial ventilation. For this reason, in the event that organ donation is a medical possibility for me, I allow intensive medical measures to be carried out for a short period of time (up to 72 hours) to determine brain death in accordance with the guidelines of the German Medical Association (Bundesärztekammer) and for the subsequent removal of the organs.

I also consent to intensive medical measures being carried out for the protection of the organs until they are removed.

The same applies in the event that the irreversible loss of all functions of the brain (brain death) is expected to occur within a few days.

If, under these conditions, you would like the intensive medical measures to be carried out only for a limited amount of time, you should document this:

The intensive medical measures must not be continued for longer than ____ hours.

Wording if you would like to donate any and all organs and tissue, without restriction.

I consent to the removal of my organs and tissue after my death for transplant purposes.

I have filled out an organ donor card, which can be found at the following location:

In the event that there is no organ donor card:

I have not filled out an organ donor card.

If you want to exclude certain organs and/or tissue from being removed, you need to specify these:

I give permission for the removal of organs and tissue, except for the following: _____

If you want to restrict the removal to certain organs and/or tissue, you need to specify these:

I give permission for the removal of only the following organs and tissue:

Organ and tissue donation refusal

Wording for organ and tissue donation refusal:

I do not consent to the removal of any of my organs and tissue after my death for transplant purposes.

I have filled out an organ donor card.

In the event that there is no organ donor card:

I have not filled out an organ donor card.

Transfer of the decision for or against organ and tissue removal to another person

You can transfer the decision about organ and tissue removal after your death to another person you trust:

I transfer the decision about organ and tissue removal to the following person:

Last name, First name _____

Street, House number _____

Postcode, Town _____

Telephone number (landline) _____

Telephone number (mobile) _____

E-mail _____

More info on advance decisions

For further information, please refer to the brochure entitled "Patientenverfügung. Wie sichere ich meine Selbstbestimmung in gesundheitlichen Angelegenheiten?", issued by the Federal Ministry of Justice: www.bmj.de.

Organ Donation Hotline

If you have any questions, call the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) Organ Donation Hotline on freephone 0800 90 40 400.

More information

Information available online at www.organspende-info.de.

You can order an organ donor card and information leaflets free of charge from the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA):

By post: BZgA, 50819 Cologne, Germany,
By fax: 0221 8992-257
By e-mail: bestellung@bzga.de

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Charlotte Schielke, BZgA

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**It doesn't matter how you
carry it; the main thing is that
you have one:**

Organ Donor Card 

acc. to Section 2 of the German Transplantation Act

Organ Donation


.....


Last name, first name Date of birth

.....

Street Postcode, Town

.....

 Bundeszentrale
für
gesundheitliche
Aufklärung

 **Organ Donation**
give life.

If you have any questions, call the Organ Donation Hotline on freephone
0800 / 90 40 400.

The Organ Donor Card!

Get informed; make a decision; fill it out.

www.organspende-info.de

Have you made your decision?

Organ Donation Declaration

If **organ/tissue donation** for **transplantation** is possible **after my death**, I declare:

YES, I give permission for organs and tissue to be taken from my body after a doctor has certified my death.

or **YES**, I give permission for the use of organs and tissue, **except** the following:
.....

or **YES**, I give my permission, but **only** for the following organs and tissue:
.....

or **NO**, I do not wish organs or tissue to be taken from my body.

or The following person should decide YES or NO:
.....

.....

Last name, first name Telephone number

.....

Street Postcode, Town

.....

Space for **notes/additional information**

DATE SIGNATURE

Then fill out your own personal organ donor card here.

www.organspende-info.de