

Organ donation in the event of death in the ICU



A loved one is in the Intensive Care Unit, and you're considering organ donation when they die. To help you in making a decision, this fact sheet explains how this is done.

Why choose organ donation?

In Quebec, hundreds of people are on a transplant wait list. Donors are rare. Only 1% of hospital deaths can lead to organ donation.

Each person who donates their organs saves up to 8 lives. This generous gesture can bring comfort to the donor's loved ones.

What if I don't know my loved one's wishes?

If you don't know whether your loved one wished to donate organs, you have 2 options:

- > See if your loved one has signed the organ donation authorization sticker and affixed it to the back of their health insurance (RAMQ) card.
- > The care team can check whether your loved one is listed in the organ donation authorization registry (in Quebec: at the *Chambre des notaires* or at the *Régie de l'assurance maladie*).

If your loved one hasn't registered their wishes anywhere, the decision to authorize organ donation is yours.



What happens when the family consents to organ donation?

- > A Transplant Québec liaison nurse will meet with you in a separate room, and will answer all your questions.
- > In the meantime, your loved one will remain in their room in the Intensive Care Unit. The care team will be watching over them and will keep you informed of all developments.
- > Your loved one will undergo certain tests to check the condition of their organs: ultrasounds, x-rays, blood tests, etc.

Even if the organs can't be donated, the liaison nurse will remain by your side until the end to offer you support.

- > The care team will let you know when your loved one is going to the operating room to have their organs removed. Depending on the case, it can take up to 72 hours from the time of death to the time of organ removal.
- > With your consent, Transplant Québec will follow up with you within 24 hours of the transplants to let you know if they have been done.

Can I know who received my loved one's organs?

No. Because organ donation is confidential, Transplant Québec can't tell you who received the organs. However, you'll be told which organs your loved one donated. You'll also be able to send cards to recipients through Transplant Québec. See the Useful Resources section at the end of this fact sheet.

Will it be possible to do an end-of-life ritual?

Yes. You can do an end-of-life ritual before your loved one is taken to the operating room. Note that children are welcome in the Intensive Care Unit. Seeing their loved one at the end of life or deceased may help them in their mourning.

Ceremonies are held each year to honour donors and their families. You can participate if you wish.

Will it be possible to view my loved one's body?

Yes. Even after organ donation, your loved one's body can be prepared for viewing. There will be no visible trace of the operations.

What support is available to me?

The intensive care staff and the liaison nurse will support you throughout the process. Feel free to talk with them if you have questions or need help.

In addition, a meeting can be arranged with a psychologist, social worker, or spiritual care provider, as needed. Talk with the care team if you're interested in this for yourself or your child(ren).

Finally, the liaison nurse will call you 2 months after your loved one's death to offer support.

Who can I contact for help or to ask questions?

If you have any questions about your loved one's condition, contact the bedside nurse.

> **514 890-8000, ext :**

If you have questions about organ donation, contact the liaison nurse.

> **514 890-8000, ext 25718**

For any other question, you can call the intensive care unit at any time.

Tel. :



RESSOURCES UTILES

Transplant Québec :

> **1 855 373-1414**

> **transplantquebec.ca/en**

To find out how to send cards to recipients, click on The Donor's Family → Give and Receive News.

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation



You can also find them on our website

chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca

