

## Consequences for family members

Family members may be present during the entire period from the withdrawal of treatment and when the patient dies of cardiac and respiratory arrest. Five minutes later the family members are escorted to the waiting room, while a machine providing oxygenated blood is being set up. This takes about 10 - 15 minutes. When the machine has been connected, the family members may return bedside again for a short time, before the deceased is transported to the operating room.

## Organ donation

Withdrawal of treatment takes place in the intensive care unit. The deceased is then transferred to surgery for organ donation. The operation takes about 3 to 5 hours.

## Viewing after organ donation

Families will have the opportunity to say goodbye to the deceased after the organ donation. The ICU nurse can help to arrange this.

## Organ Donation after Circulatory Death

It is possible to donate 2 kidneys, the liver, pancreas, lungs and heart valves with this type of organ donation. In some cases local procedures also enables donation of corneas and tendons.

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# Organ Donation after Circulatory Death



**When it is no longer possible to save the life of a patient, organ donation may be an option. Death must occur before it is possible to donate organs.**

**Death occurs when there is no longer any blood supply to the brain. Bodily functions can be maintained with a respirator and other artificial means. You will find more information in the brochure “Information about organ donation for family members”.**

**In some cases it is also possible to donate organs after cardiac and respiratory arrest, when death occurs after withdrawal of life-prolonging treatment in the intensive care unit.**

### **The decision to withdraw intensive care treatment**

Treatment intended to maintain life by artificial means will be withdrawn when there is no longer any hope of improvement or survival. This includes situations where no further treatment is possible, and the patient has such severe brain damage that further treatment is meaningless.

The decision to withdraw treatment is based on medical and health professional assessments regarding proper treatment in the best interests of the patient.

The decision to withdraw life-prolonging treatment is independent of whether organ donation is relevant or not.

### **Agreement on the decision**

The treating physicians will make the final decision to withdraw treatment. It is essential, however, that family members receive proper information about the patient's situation, so that they can better understand and accept this decision. Family members must comprehend that the patient will die when intensive care treatment is withdrawn.

### **Possibility of organ donation**

In some cases, it will be possible to donate organs after the patient has died. The treating physician will contact the transplant coordinator at Oslo University Hospital, Rikshospitalet. They will assess if the patient can be suitable for organ donation.

Treating physician and nurse will speak with next of kin regarding the patient's wishes and views on organ donation.

### **Requirements for donating organs**

If the patient does not die within 90 minutes after treatment is withdrawn, organ donation will not be possible. This is because the organs will not be functional for transplantation if too much time passes. Some may experience this as a disappointment.

Health care personnel will continue end-of-life care for the patient and family members, regardless of whether or not an organ donation takes place.

### **When death occurs**

Once it is determined cardiac and respiratory arrest, an additional 5 minutes must pass before the death certificate is signed by the physician.



### **Procedures for organ donation after circulatory death**

Before treatment is withdrawn, it is necessary to insert two cannulas into the blood vessels of the groin.

After the cardiac and respiratory arrest have lasted 5 minutes and the patient is declared dead, a machine will be connected to the body of the deceased. This procedure takes about 10-15 minutes. The machine provides oxygenated blood to the liver, kidneys and pancreas to preserve the function of the organs. A catheter in the aorta will prevent blood flow reentering the heart.

**It is most important to facilitate a dignified passing.**

**When life-prolonging treatment is withdrawn, palliative treatment must be continued or increased. The patient must have adequate pain and other symptom management.**

**Family members must feel secure and supported in the situation. Next of kin are important spokespersons for the patient's values and wishes regarding the end of life.**