

## TALK ABOUT

# ORGAN DONATION

Decide for yourself and complete an organ donor card.

Organ donor card

 TALK ABOUT ORGAN DONATION  
LEBEN-IST-TEILEN.CH

Expression of wishes concerning the removal of organs, tissues or cells for transplantation purposes



## INFORMATION ON THE REMOVAL OF ORGANS, TISSUES OR CELLS AFTER DEATH.

### THREE GOOD REASONS TO TALK ABOUT ORGAN DONATION

## 1. For my own sake

I decide for myself what happens to my body, throughout – and beyond – my lifetime. This includes whether or not I wish to donate organs, tissues or cells after my death.

## 2. For my relatives' sake

Sometimes the question of organ donation can arise very suddenly. I'll be glad if my loved ones are aware of my wishes and can decide accordingly – this will ease the burden during their bereavement.

## 3. For the sake of life

In Switzerland, many patients are waiting for a donor organ. By becoming a donor, I could save lives.

### TALK ABOUT ORGAN DONATION. MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR YOUR RELATIVES

Donated organs, tissues or cells can be life-saving and can dramatically improve the recipients' quality of life. Decide now whether you consent to the removal of organs, tissues or cells after your death. If your next of kin are not aware of your wishes, they will face the additional burden of making a decision about donation on your behalf. Think about this question and then complete the donor card at the end of this leaflet. By talking to your relatives about your decision, you can make things easier for them.

#### Further information is available online:

[www.leben-ist-teilen.ch](http://www.leben-ist-teilen.ch), [www.swisstransplant.org](http://www.swisstransplant.org)  
or from your GP.

### WHAT CAN BE DONATED?

After death, the following organs can be donated: the kidneys, lungs, liver, heart, pancreas (or islet cells) and small intestine. As well as organs, tissues can be donated, such as the cornea, or heart valves and large blood vessels. In certain diseases, corneal transplants are the last hope for patients who would otherwise go blind. Heart valve and vascular transplants can be life-saving for patients with malformations, infections or cancer.

*At present, blood stem cells are only obtained from living donors. For people with disorders of the haematopoietic system, blood stem cell transplants often offer the only hope of recovery. If you would like to find out more about donating blood stem cells, or to register as a donor, please visit the Swiss Transfusion SRC website: <http://en.blutspende.ch/>*

### WHAT ARE THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DONATION?

- Organs, tissues or cells may only be removed from a deceased person if consent has been granted and death has been determined.
- If no documented consent or refusal by the deceased person is available (e.g. in the form of a donor card or advance directive), the next of kin are asked if they are aware of their relative's wishes. If they are not, they have to make the decision, taking into account the deceased person's presumed wishes.
- If there are no next of kin, or they cannot be contacted, the removal of organs, tissues or cells is not permitted.
- The wishes of the deceased person take priority over those of the next of kin.
- If the deceased person has delegated the decision to a trusted person, the decision must be made by this person instead of the next of kin.

These requirements are specified in the Transplantation Act.

## ARE PAYMENTS MADE FOR DONATION?

Under the Transplantation Act, trade in organs, tissues or cells is prohibited, and donation must be performed on a non-commercial basis.

Organs, tissues or cells are always donated voluntarily, without any financial reward. Nor do relatives suffer any financial disadvantages as a result of the donation.

## WHO CAN BE A DONOR?

Organs, tissues or cells can usually be donated even in old age. What is crucial is not the age but the state of health of the donor and the functionality of the organs or tissues. It may even be possible for people with certain diseases (including some cancers) to donate organs and tissues. The suitability of these is assessed shortly before or when they are removed.

Anyone aged 16 or over can complete a donor card. For younger people, decisions on donation are made by the legal representatives.

## WHEN IS ORGAN REMOVAL POSSIBLE?

Organ removal from a deceased person is possible if death has occurred as a result of direct (primary) brain damage, e.g. after a brain haemorrhage or an accident involving head injury. More rarely, organ removal is also possible if a person has died as a result of indirect (secondary) brain damage after cardiac arrest.

People who die at home cannot become donors, since organ removal requires preparatory medical measures that can only be carried out in a hospital (see the section entitled "Why are preparatory medical measures required?").

## WHEN IS TISSUE REMOVAL POSSIBLE?

Corneal tissue can be removed from any deceased person; no preparatory medical measures are necessary. Removal can take place up to 48 hours after death.

Heart valves are removed in cases where a donor's heart is not medically suitable for transplantation (e.g. after a heart attack). Accordingly, if you consent to heart donation, you should not exclude heart valve or blood vessel donation.



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Because it's not easy to speak for other people, I tell my loved ones what I want. That means they can make a decision in accordance with my wishes.

## HOW IS DEATH DETERMINED?

Before organs can be removed from a deceased donor, the person's death must be established beyond any doubt. This requires confirmation from two appropriately qualified physicians (double checking principle) that all functions of the brain and brainstem have irreversibly ceased (also known as diagnosis of brain death). The examinations and tests required for this purpose are precisely defined and must be confirmed in writing.

In Switzerland, death must be determined in this manner for any potential organ donor, regardless of whether it has occurred as a result of direct or indirect brain damage. The physicians who diagnose brain death must not belong to the medical teams that carry out organ removal or transplantation.

## WHY ARE PREPARATORY MEDICAL MEASURES REQUIRED?

Preparatory medical measures are carried out between the discontinuation of treatment and organ removal. In a person who is gravely ill or severely injured, life-sustaining therapy is only discontinued if death is unavoidable and any further treatment is thus futile. The decision to discontinue treatment is always made without regard to whether consent has been given to the removal of organs, tissues or cells.

Preparatory medical measures are of no direct benefit to the patient. They are necessary to preserve the organs. Without preparatory medical measures, successful transplantation would not be possible. For this reason, the donor card is designed in such a way that consent is given both to removal and to the necessary preparatory measures.

In the absence of a donor card, preparatory medical measures may only be carried out with the consent of the relatives or the trusted person.

Anyone preparing an advance directive who wishes to become a donor should explicitly state that, in the event of organ donation, the necessary preparatory measures may be undertaken.

## WHAT KIND OF PREPARATORY MEDICAL MEASURES ARE CARRIED OUT?

To prevent damage to the organs, various types of measures are required, depending on the situation:

- Existing artificial respiration is continued.
- Drugs are administered to maintain circulatory function and regulate hormone levels.
- Blood samples are collected for laboratory tests. The results are used to assess organ functions.

## ORGAN DONATION: A TYPICAL EXAMPLE

### A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

A man is admitted to hospital with a severe brain haemorrhage. The medical and nursing teams in the emergency department and intensive care unit do all they can to save his life. Unfortunately, their efforts are unsuccessful, and his death cannot be prevented. Any further treatment would thus be futile.

### WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

In this case, the doctors speak to the relatives about the possibility of organ or tissue donation. The patient becomes a potential donor if he has expressed his wishes to donate, and given his consent to the preparatory measures, in writing (e.g. on a donor card or in an advance directive). In the absence of such declarations, the next of kin are asked whether the patient has talked about donation during his lifetime. If the patient's wishes are unknown, the decision is made by the relatives, taking into account the patient's presumed wishes. If consent is granted, artificial respiration is then continued and, if necessary, other preparatory medical measures are undertaken so as to preserve the organs.

In the absence of consent to organ or tissue donation, all therapeutic measures would now be discontinued.

### DETERMINATION OF DEATH

The doctors now perform the tests specified for the determination of death (so-called diagnosis of brain death). These confirm that the patient is dead. Because the patient is undergoing artificial respiration, typical external signs of death such as rigor mortis or livor mortis are, however, absent.

### SEARCH FOR SUITABLE RECIPIENTS

The search for suitable recipients now begins. The closer the match between the blood and tissue of the donor and recipient, the better the organ will function after transplantation, and the lower the risk of rejection. This assessment requires numerous laboratory tests.

### ORGAN REMOVAL

When the search for recipients is started, preparations also begin for the removal of the organ from the deceased donor. Coordination of these procedures is highly complex. Once suitable recipients have been identified, the donor is taken to the operating theatre. After removal, the organs have to be transported to the transplantation centres as rapidly as possible, since without perfusion they only remain viable for a short time. If additional tissues are harvested, this is done after organ removal. Tissue removal is less time-sensitive, since tissues can be stored and do not have to be transplanted straight away.

The donation process – from determination of death to completion of organ and tissue removal – generally takes 12 to 24 hours. The relatives are not informed as to who has been allocated an organ or who has received tissue.

### SAYING GOODBYE

After the organs and tissues have been removed, all the incisions are closed. The location of the sutures means that they are not visible when the body is laid out for viewing. The relatives can now say goodbye.

## POINTS TO NOTE ABOUT THE DONOR CARD

- On the attached donor card, you can indicate whether or not you wish to become a donor. You can also decide to donate only the organs, tissues or cells you specify.
- Successful transplantation is not possible unless preparatory medical measures are carried out. For this reason, the donor card is designed in such a way that consent is given both to removal and to the necessary preparatory measures.
- If the donor card has been lost or cannot be found, the next of kin are asked whether they are aware of the deceased person's wishes concerning donation of organs, tissues or cells. If they are not, they have to make the decision, taking into account the deceased person's presumed wishes. You should therefore always make your wishes known to your relatives and, if appropriate, to other trusted persons.
- Give the completed duplicate donor card to your relatives or to the specified trusted person.
- If you change your mind, destroy the old card, complete a new one and tell your relatives about your decision.
- The information on the donor card is not registered anywhere else, so keep the card with you at all times.
- Anyone aged 16 or over can complete a donor card.
- Donor cards from other countries, earlier versions of the Swiss donor card, or simple handwritten notes are considered valid if, as well as clearly expressed wishes, they include the donor's first name, surname and date of birth and are dated and signed.

## STEP BY STEP TO YOUR OWN DONOR CARD

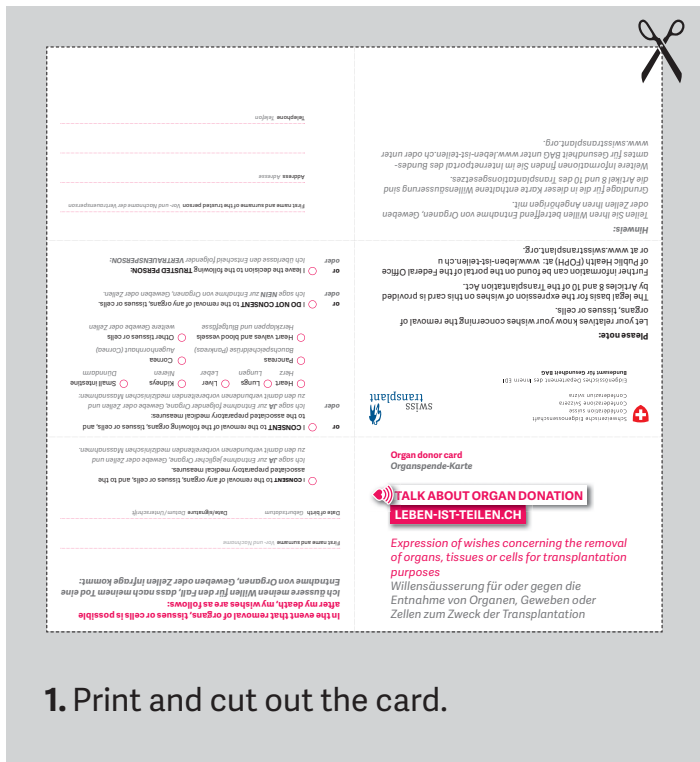
- 1 Fill in your first name and surname, writing legibly in capital letters.
- 2 Include your date of birth to avoid confusion with other people of the same name.
- 3 Sign and date the card.
- 4 Decide whether, in the event of your death, you wish to permit the removal of any or certain organs, tissues or cells, or to withhold your consent. You can also leave this decision to a trusted person.  
**N.B. Only one of these four options is to be selected!**
- 5 Talk to your relatives about your wishes. Complete the duplicate card and give it to your relatives or trusted person.
- 6 Keep your donor card with you at all times (e.g. in your wallet or purse).
- 7 If you change your mind about donation, simply destroy your old card, complete a new one and tell your relatives about your decision.

*Donor cards can be ordered online or printed out at:  
[www.leben-ist-teilen.ch](http://www.leben-ist-teilen.ch) or [www.swisstransplant.org](http://www.swisstransplant.org)*

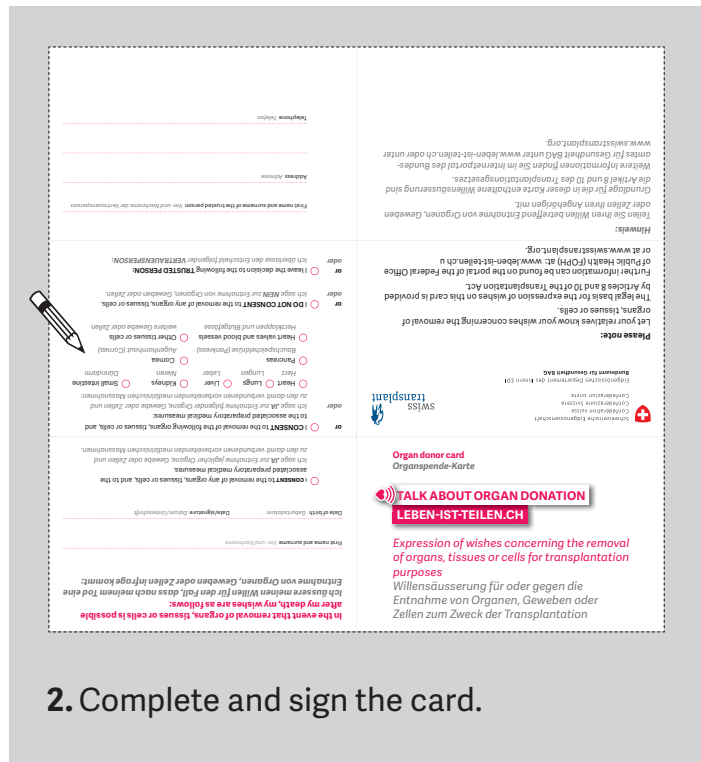
*Donor cards can also be obtained free of charge from many medical practices, pharmacies and hospitals, or from: Swisstransplant, Postfach, CH-3011 Bern (free hotline 0800 570 234)*

*You can also express your wishes concerning organ donation in a digital donor card, stored on your smartphone. This is part of the Medical ID app (available for iOS or Android), which can be downloaded free of charge from [www.swisstransplant.org](http://www.swisstransplant.org)*

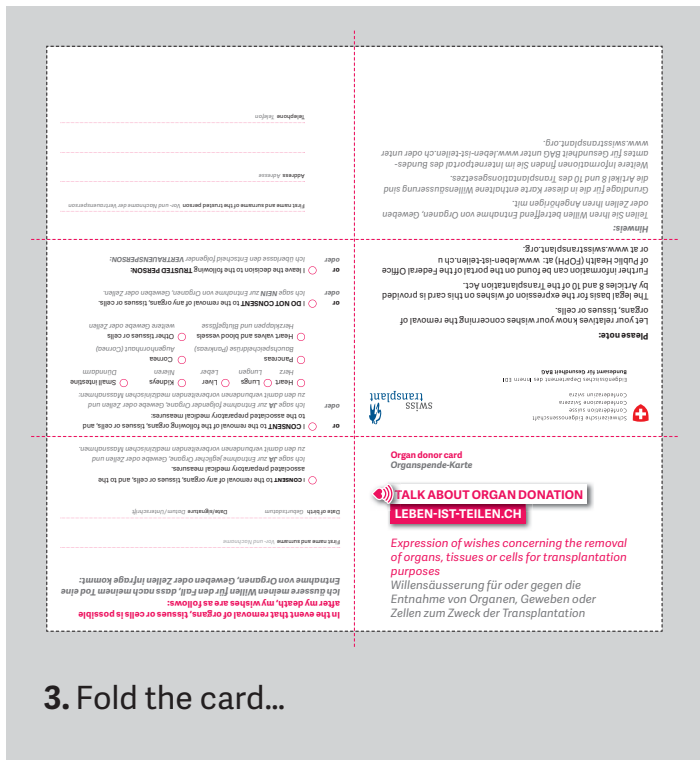




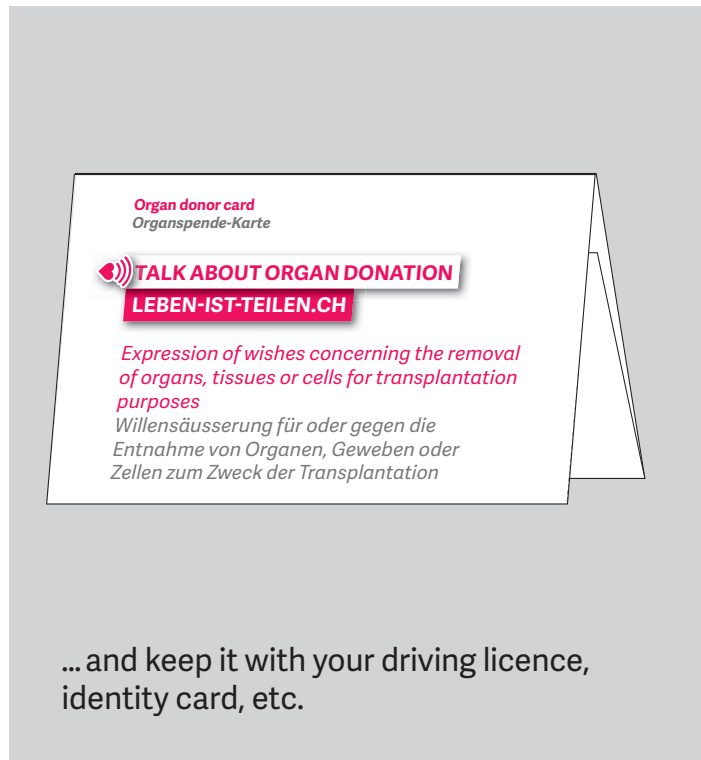
1. Print and cut the card.



2. Complete and sign the card.



3. Fold the card...



... and keep it with your driving licence, identity card, etc.



Telephone Telefon

Address Adresse

First name and surname of the trusted person Vor- und Nachname der Vertrauensperson

I leave the decision to the following TRUSTED PERSON:  
oder  Ich überlasse den Entscheid folgender VERTRAUENSPERSON:

I DO NOT CONSENT to the removal of any organs, tissues or cells.  
oder  Ich sage NEIN zur Entnahme von Organen, Geweben oder Zellen.

- Heart  Herz
  - Lungs  Lungen
  - Liver  Leber
  - Small intestine  Dünndarm
  - Kidneys  Nieren
  - Pancreas  Bauchspeicheldrüse (Pankreas)
  - Cornea  Augenhornhaut (Cornea)
  - Heart valves and blood vessels  Herzklappen und Blutgefässe
  - Other tissues or cells  weitere Gewebe oder Zellen
- oder  I CONSENT to the removal of the following organs, tissues or cells, and to the associated preparatory medical measures:  
oder  Ich sage JA zur Entnahme folgender Organe, Gewebe oder Zellen und zu den damit verbundenen vorbereitenden medizinischen Massnahmen:

I CONSENT to the removal of any organs, tissues or cells, and to the associated preparatory medical measures.  
Ich sage JA zur Entnahme jeglicher Organe, Gewebe oder Zellen und zu den damit verbundenen vorbereitenden medizinischen Massnahmen.

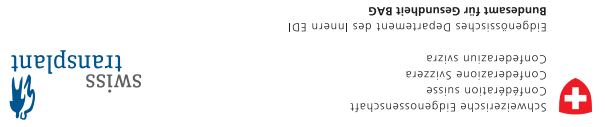
Date of birth Geburtsdatum

First name and surname Vor- und Nachname

**In the event that removal of organs, tissues or cells is possible after my death, my wishes are as follows:**  
**Ich äusserer meinen Willen für den Fall, dass nach meinem Tod eine Entnahme von Organen, Geweben oder Zellen infrage kommt:**

**Hinweis:**  
Teilen Sie Ihren Willen betreffend Entnahme von Organen, Geweben oder Zellen Ihren Angehörigen mit.  
Grundlage für die in dieser Karte enthaltene Willensäusserung sind die Artikel 8 und 10 des Transplantationsgesetzes.  
Weitere Informationen finden Sie im Internetportal des Bundesamtes für Gesundheit BAG unter [www.leben-ist-teilen.ch](http://www.leben-ist-teilen.ch) oder unter [www.wisstransplant.org](http://www.wisstransplant.org).

**Please note:**  
Let your relatives know your wishes concerning the removal of organs, tissues or cells.  
The legal basis for the expression of wishes on this card is provided by Articles 8 and 10 of the Transplantation Act.  
Further information can be found on the portal of the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) at: [www.leben-ist-teilen.ch](http://www.leben-ist-teilen.ch) or at [www.wisstransplant.org](http://www.wisstransplant.org).



**Organ donor card  
Organspende-Karte**



*Expression of wishes concerning the removal of organs, tissues or cells for transplantation purposes*  
*Willensäusserung für oder gegen die Entnahme von Organen, Geweben oder Zellen zum Zweck der Transplantation*



Telephone Telefon

Address Adresse

First name and surname of the trusted person Vor- und Nachname der Vertrauensperson



I DO NOT CONSENT to the removal of any organs, tissues or cells.

I CONSENT to the removal of the following organs, tissues or cells, and to the associated preparatory medical measures:

- Heart  Lungs  Liver  Small intestine
- Heart valves and blood vessels  Other tissues or cells
- Pancreas  Cornea
- Herz  Lungen  Leber  Nieren  Dünndarm
- Bauchspeicheldrüse (Pankreas)  Augenhornhaut (Cornea)
- Herzkappen und Blutgefässe  weitere Gewebe oder Zellen

Ich sage JA zur Entnahme folgender Organe, Gewebe oder Zellen und zu den damit verbundenen vorbereitenden medizinischen Massnahmen:

I CONSENT to the removal of any organs, tissues or cells, and to the associated preparatory medical measures.

Date of birth Geburtsdatum

First name and surname Vor- und Nachname

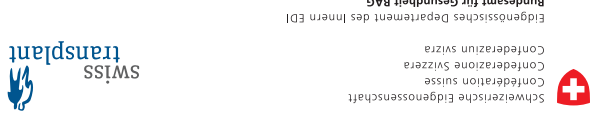


**In the event that removal of organs, tissues or cells is possible after my death, my wishes are as follows:**

Entnahme von Organen, Geweben oder Zellen im Falle meiner Abreise

**Hinweis:**  
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Willensäusserung für oder gegen die Entnahme von Organen, Geweben oder Zellen zum Zweck der Transplantation