

"In my family we all carry donor cards and would encourage all Sikhs to do so"
Dr. Indarjit Singh OBE, Director
Network of Sikh Organizations, UK

Organ Donation is a great gift but more donors are needed

Everyone can make a difference
Please

- Talk to your family
- Register your wishes
- Carry a donor card

ORGANATHON FOUNDATION

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Website: www.organathonfoundation.org

Information on Sikhism is also available from:
www.bbc.co.uk/religion

Transplants save lives



ORGANathon
BE A DOER ... BE A DONOR

SIKHISM AND ORGAN DONATION

A GUIDE TO ORGAN DONATION AND SIKH BELIEFS

Website: www.organathonfoundation.org

The right page features a light blue background with a grid pattern. At the top, the Organathon logo is displayed. Below it, the title 'SIKHISM AND ORGAN DONATION' is written in large, bold, red letters, with a red Khanda symbol to its left. Underneath the title, the subtitle 'A GUIDE TO ORGAN DONATION AND SIKH BELIEFS' is written in a smaller, black font. At the bottom of the page, there is a row of five circular icons representing different organs: a liver, a pancreas, a pair of lungs, a pair of kidneys, and a heart. The website address 'www.organathonfoundation.org' is printed at the very bottom.

Organ Donation

Organ donation is the gift of an organ to help someone else who needs a transplant. Hundreds of people's lives are saved each year by organ transplants. Organs that can be donated by people who have died include the heart, lungs, kidney, liver, pancreas and small bowel. Tissue such as skin, bone, heart valves and corneas can also be used to help others.

When can organ donation take place?

Doctors and nurses are committed to doing everything possible to save life. Organs are only removed for transplantation once all attempts to save life have failed and after death has been certified by a doctor or doctors who are entirely independent of the transplant team.

Most donated organs come from people who died from a severe brain injury and who receive treatment on a ventilation in an intensive care unit. The brain injury damages vital centres in the brain stem which are essential to maintain life. No one can live once these centres have been destroyed. Tests can show conclusively when this has happened.

In some circumstances, patients who die in hospital but are not on ventilator may also donate. They are called non-heartbeating donors.

Sometimes people who do not die in hospital can become tissue donors.

Consent

The consent, or lack of objection, of those closest to the patient is always sought before organs can be donated. This is why it is so important for people to discuss their wishes with their loved ones. Donation is an individual choice and views differ even within the same religious groups. Many families who agree to organ donation have said that it helps to know some good come from their loss.

Care and respect

The removal of organs is carried out with the greatest care and respect. The family can see the body afterwards and staff can contact a chaplain or local religious leader if the family wishes.

Sikhism and organ donation

The Sikh philosophy and teachings places great emphasis on the importance of giving and putting others before oneself.

*"Where self exists, there is no God
Where God exists, there is no self."*

Guru Nanak, Guru Granth Sahib

The Sikh faith stresses the importance of performing noble deeds. There are many examples of selfless giving and sacrifice in Sikh teachings by the ten Gurus and other Sikhs.

Sikh believe life after death is a continuous cycle of rebirth but the physical body is not needed in this cycle-a person's soul is their real essence.

"The dead sustain their bond with the living through virtuous deeds."

Guru Nanak, Guru Granth Sahib

"The Sikh religion teaches that life continues after death in the soul, and not the physical body. The last act of giving and helping others through organ donation is both consistent with, and in the spirit of, Sikh teachings."

Dr. Indarjit Singh OBE, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisation UK

"The true servants of God are those who serve him through helping others."

Guru Nanak, Guru Granth Sahib.

