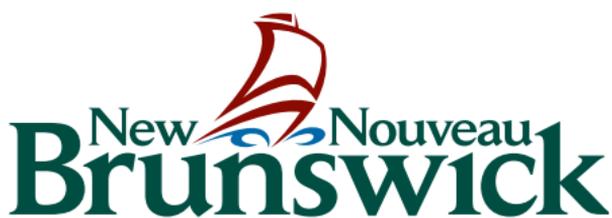
A pair of hands is shown from the top, holding a teal awareness ribbon. The ribbon is looped and held taut between the fingers. The background is a plain, light color.

Organ and Tissue Donation

***Talk about it!
Answers to your questions***

***Being a donor
can save lives!***

The logo for New Brunswick / Nouveau Brunswick. It features a stylized red and white sailboat icon above the text. The word "New" is in a smaller font above "Brunswick", and "Nouveau" is in a smaller font above "Brunswick".

New Brunswick / Nouveau Brunswick

Many people in New Brunswick are waiting to hear that organs have been found which could restore them to full and active lives. Many others are waiting for a tissue transplant. There is a critical shortage of organs and tissues for transplant, so most of these people can only wait and hope.

Organ and tissue transplants are no longer experimental. Medical and drug research as well as advances in surgical techniques have brought us to the point where transplantation is a common practice. This brochure will answer organ and tissue donation questions you may have.

How can I be a donor?

If you would like to be an organ and tissue donor, it is important to make a commitment. Tell those closest to you about your decision. You can indicate your intent to be a donor by checking the appropriate box and signing your Medicare renewal form. New Medicare cards will have your wishes about donation clearly displayed on the card. If you wish to indicate your intent to be a donor before renewing your card, please contact Service New Brunswick.

Who can be a donor?

Anyone can donate organs and tissues. The medical suitability of the organs and tissues is determined by trained health professionals *after* a donor's death.

Can a person be too old to donate?

Although there are age restrictions for certain organs and tissues, you should not let age stand in the way of your commitment to be a donor.

Will everything be done to save my life?

Yes. Medical personnel always do everything possible to save the life of a patient. Organ donation is not considered until neurological death has been declared by two physicians who are not involved with the Transplant Program. There are rigorous criteria for determining neurological death.

What is neurological death?

Death and neurological death are the same: the irreversible cessation of all brain functions. Once neurological death occurs, it is only a matter of time before the heart and other vital organs stop functioning.

Can my next of kin make a decision for me?

Under the *Human Tissue Gift Act* (April 2005) all people who die in hospitals are considered potential organ and/or tissue donors. If your wishes have not been recorded, your family will be asked to consent to donation.

Can my next of kin withhold permission even if I have registered to be a donor?

Under the *Human Tissue Gift Act*, the person entitled to consent will be approached by a health professional when death has occurred or is imminent for donation. He or she will be discouraged from overriding your wishes, if known.

What happens to my body after the organs and tissues have been removed?

Organ and tissue retrieval is a careful surgical procedure that leaves no visible disfigurement. After organs and tissues have been removed, the body is returned to the family for funeral arrangements.

Will my donation remain confidential?

The NB Organ and Tissue Procurement Program's mandate ensures complete confidentiality for the donor. Unless the family releases the information or it is legally required, only the immediate family need know about the donation.

Can children be donors?

Parents or guardians can give consent for organ and tissue donation by children.

What is the view of religious groups on organ and tissue donation?

Most religious groups support the concept on the basis that organ and tissue donation is a life giving or life enhancing gift to another individual.

How successful are transplants?

There have been tremendous advances in recent years. Most transplant recipients return to useful and productive lives.

If I donate my whole body to a medical school, can I still be an organ and tissue donor?

No. In this case, only the eyes can be used for transplantation purposes.

Organs and tissues most frequently needed

Eyes: For people with corneal disease or injury, eyes are desperately needed to restore sight. The procedure has a 95% success rate.

Hearts: Many people of all ages suffer from serious heart disorders. For them, heart transplants are the only hope of survival. For others, quality of life can be greatly improved with the implantation of a heart valve.

Kidneys: People who suffer from kidney failure can be kept alive with dialysis. However, the dialysis cannot completely replace kidney function, and their diet and lifestyle are severely restricted. Kidney transplantation allows recipients to lead full and healthy lives and, in most cases, is successful.

Liver: Certain irreversible liver conditions mean death for the patient, but liver transplantation gives new hope. Although the procedure is delicate, statistics indicate it is successful.

Lungs: When a patient has severe life-threatening respiratory problems, lung transplants are carried out. Sometimes a lung and a heart transplant are performed at the same time.

Pancreas: Diabetics can live free of insulin injections when they are provided with pancreas transplants.

Bones and joints: When diagnosed early, people with cancerous bone tumors or severe trauma injuries might have their limbs saved. In some cases, transplantation can be an alternative to amputation. In addition, some cases of injured and arthritic knees and hips can be reconstructed, preventing the individuals from becoming crippled.

Skin: For severe burn victims, donated skin can be used as a temporary dressing until their skin can be grafted. Skin can also be used to treat severe ulcers caused by conditions such as diabetes.

If you require further information about what you need to do to become a donor, contact Service New Brunswick at 1-888-762-8600 or dial (506) 684-7901 if you reside in Dalhousie. For any other information contact us at:

Organ and Tissue Procurement Program
Dept. of Health
Hospital Services Branch
P. O. Box 5100
Fredericton, N. B.
E3B 5G8
Tel: (506) 643-6848

NB Eye Bank
130 Bayard Drive
Saint John, NB E2L 3L6
Tel: (506) 632-5541