



# The Organ Donation Process

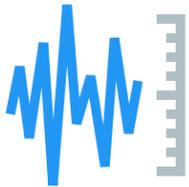
One organ donor can save up to eight lives

[BeADonor.org](http://BeADonor.org)



## 1 Recognizing Organ Donation Potential

When a ventilated patient meets **any of the triggers** that indicate donation potential, the hospital care team will contact the Washington Regional Transplant Community (WRTC), the independent, non-profit organ procurement organization (OPO) that serves the DC metropolitan area. Together, the hospital and WRTC work to preserve, protect and honor that patient's, and his/her family's opportunity to be an organ donor.



## 2 Declaring Death

Hospital care teams do everything possible to save their patient's life, regardless of that person's status as an organ donor. To be considered for organ donation, death has to be declared by one of two ways: brain death, the irreversible loss of all functions of the brain, or cardiac death, the permanent cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions. Once death has been declared, and donation authorized, care of the patient is transferred to WRTC.



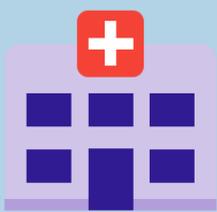
## 3 Obtaining Authorization

WRTC and hospital staff work in partnership to support the patient's family. Together, they ensure the family understands the situation, is emotionally cared for and offered the opportunity to legally authorize organ donation on behalf of their loved one. If the patient was a registered organ donor, then permission for donation already occurred through a legally-binding, first-person authorization process.



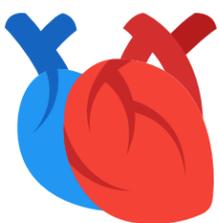
## 4 Maintaining the Donor

When authorization has been obtained, WRTC begins donor management. To maximize the number of transplantable organs, and therefore the number of lives saved, the condition and viability of each organ is carefully assessed and monitored. The donor is kept on the ventilator while tests and procedures are done to optimize organ function and health.



## 5 Recovering the Organs

Organ recovery occurs in a hospital operating room, under the same standards and procedures as any other surgery, and great care is taken to respect the integrity of the donor's body. Once the organs are recovered, they are immediately transported to the waiting recipients who are a match for each of these precious gifts.



## 6 Transplanting the Gift of Life

One organ donor can save up to eight lives by donating a heart, lungs (2), pancreas, small intestine, kidneys (2) and liver (can be split). After organ recovery is complete, the donor's family assumes care of the body and can proceed with plans for memorial services, funeral, etc. It is a beautifully bittersweet moment in time where one family says a painful "goodbye" while potentially eight families are overwhelmed with gratitude for the gift of life their loved one received.



## 7 Caring for Donor Families

Shortly after recovery and transplantation, WRTC contacts every donor family and offers them specialized bereavement services, grief counseling, support groups, etc. These services are provided for any length of time each family needs.

