

Organ and Tissue Donation after Assisted Dying

Information for Attending Medical Practitioners (AMP)

Thank you for considering and supporting your patient's end of life wishes which may include organ and/or tissue donation. This information will assist you in discussing donation with a patient who wishes to explore it in the context of Assisted Dying (AD).

Starting the Assisted Dying Donation (ADD) process

Organ Donation New Zealand (ODNZ) welcomes enquiries from patients, whānau or clinicians. To minimise any actual, potential, or perceived influence on a decision to pursue ADD, ODNZ will defer any queries about the possibility of ADD until after the patient has been confirmed eligible for the AD pathway.

Considering the option of ADD is best when the patient has supportive loved ones present to help them process the key information. For suggestions on having conversations about ADD, see "*A Conversational Guide for Donation after Assisted Dying*."

If your patient would like to find out more, you can refer them to ODNZ (09 630 0935 or contactus@donor.co.nz) or provide them with our guide "*Organ and Tissue Donation after Assisted Dying; Information sheet for the person and whānau*."

ODNZ will support each case on an individual basis.

The patient may choose not to proceed with organ or tissue donation at any time and this will not affect their right to choose AD.

Considerations for tissue donation after AD

- It is possible to donate both corneas to restore sight to two people. Sclera can be donated to help two or more people. The remaining tissue can be donated for medical research
- Donation of eye tissue does not require a hospital admission and can occur after AD from home, hospice, or the funeral directors
- Patients with an active malignancy may be suitable for eye donation. Haematological malignancies and CNS disorders will exclude all tissue donation
- If death occurs outside the AD pathway, eye tissue donation may still be possible. ODNZ must be contacted within 12 hours of death

Considerations for organ donation after AD

- In Aotearoa New Zealand it is possible to donate lungs, liver and both kidneys after AD
- ADD is only possible if death occurs in hospital. This is required to ensure minimum ischaemic damage to organs
- The AD will need to occur in a suitable location near theatre. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Active cancer precludes organ donation.

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- Patients with a neurodegenerative disorder such as Motor Neurone Disease may be suitable for solid organ donation, but not eye and tissue donation
- For organ donation to proceed, an individual will be required to undergo several investigations, including but not limited to an abdominal/chest CT, blood and urine testing
- ODNZ does not require the hospital to have experience with organ donation. ODNZ will provide expert guidance and support with all aspects of the process

As part of the ADD process, AMP's will be asked to:

- Engage with ODNZ during the referral process
- Participate in the planning meeting with donation and hospital teams prior to the AD
- Insert intra-venous cannula
- Administer heparin as part of the organ donation protocol
- Administer AD medications
- Diagnose cessation of circulation based on an asystolic ECG
- Declare death after a five-minute period of asystole (this is referred to as a 'hands off' period)
- Complete the ANZICS determination of death form
- Complete the death certificate
- At a later date, be available to participate in a debrief to reflect and review processes

Support for AMPs

- ODNZ welcomes questions or contact from AMPs at any time
- Health New Zealand provides extra support if required and expects a second AMP to be present at the AD

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