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**How is organ donation and transplantation affected?**

Every potential organ donor is being tested for COVID-19 and if someone has COVID-19 they will not be able to donate.

Although there is no known transmission of COVID-19 through organ donation, as patients who need a transplant have to be immuno-suppressed, any risks need to be minimised as much as possible.

The situation is changing quickly, and we are aware that hospitals are dealing with a significant impact from COVID-19, which can effect the capacity to carry out donations and transplants. NHS capacity to deal with COVID-19 at this time and the safety of organ donation and patients in need of a transplant is paramount. Ensuring the safety of organ donation and transplantation during this pandemic is creating substantial challenges.

Transplants are going ahead if it is safe and appropriate, with transplant clinicians assessing individual cases and the situation in their own hospital. Transplant teams will also talk to patients awaiting a transplant operation and balance their need for a transplant against the additional challenges of being immuno-suppressed at this time.

We are continuing to monitor the situation, receiving regular updates, and are working closely with all devolved administrations, commissioners, Public Health England and organ donation, organ retrieval and organ transplant teams across the UK.

**FAQs**

**How is organ donation and transplantation affected?**

We know this remains a very worrying time for anyone waiting for an organ transplant and the safety of organ donation and transplantation is our priority.

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| We are pleased that, with a great team effort across the NHS, we were able to keep some forms of donation and transplant open for highly urgent patients. Already, transplant centres are opening again or looking to put in place safeguards to allow an increase in their service.  We have sent out guidance to support our hospital colleagues in rebuilding further to enable more patients to have the transplants they need.  During the peak of this pandemic, we have seen incredible family support for organ |
| donation and life-saving transplants. This is testament to the strong foundations laid in organ donation and transplantation in the UK and we look forward to rebuilding this life-saving work as the NHS begins the road to recovery.  We are now seeing more potential organ donors being referred, although anyone with proven COVID-19 cannot become a donor.  Deaths from other causes where a person could potentially be considered as an organ donor, are lower than normal because of a different pattern of admissions to ICU at this time.  Donation and transplantation activity will increase, as it is appropriate and safe to do so, in the coming weeks and months. We will work hard to support families and clinicians to facilitate organ donation where possible, helping more of the thousands of people waiting to have their transplants.  **How will COVID-19 affect theatre/ICU capacity for donation and transplant?** |
| NHSBT and NHS England are monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on ICU capacity and resources, working closely with Intensive Care colleagues. This is also about the safety of organ donation and transplantation.  If someone has COVID-19 they will not be able to donate, and all potential donors are being tested for COVID-19. |
| Patient safety is paramount, there needs to be a balancing of the patient’s need for transplant against the additional challenges of being immuno-suppressed at this time.  **Is it safe to have an organ transplant at the moment?**  There is no known transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) through organ donation.  Deceased organ donation is being considered on a case by case basis. Every potential organ donor is being tested for COVID-19 and if someone has COVID-19 |
| they will not be able to donate.  All potential recipients will also be tested when they are admitted for a possible transplant.  Although there is no known transmission of COVID-19 through organ donation, as patients who need a transplant have significant health problems, are going through major surgery and are immuno-suppressed, the risk of contracting COVID-19 in hospital must be balanced against the benefits of the transplant. When this is truly lifesaving then the balance is easier to call for clinicians and patients alike.  Some transplants are still going ahead if it is safe and appropriate to do so, with transplant clinicians assessing individual cases and the current situation in their own hospital.  **Are organ donations still going ahead?**  Yes, patients are still being referred for organ donation where appropriate and |
| organs are still being retrieved where possible and offered to hospitals that are still performing transplants.  The number of people being referred for organ donation is beginning to increase in some areas of the UK. |

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| Prioritising the organ donors who can help the most people will allow transplants to continue where possible and help hospitals manage their intensive care capacity.  Potential organ donors and some transplant recipients are cared for in ICU so the safety of everyone involved must be ensured.  Deaths from other causes where a person could potentially be considered as an organ donor, are lower than normal because of a different pattern of admissions to |
| ICU at this time. It will take a while for organ donation to return to previous high levels.  We continue to work with transplant retrieval teams to make sure that they can get to the donor hospital to carry out the procedure to retrieve the vital donor organs.  **Are some transplant units now closed?**  Some transplant units made the difficult decision to close their transplant programmes at the start of the pandemic. This was to support the NHS in treating COVID-19 patients and other patients needing intensive care.  However, we are working closely with commissioners and kidney transplant centres who are now considering re-opening in a phased return to normal activity as part of the wider recovery of NHS services. Some centres have opened again since the worst of the pandemic.  Transplants are still going ahead if it is safe and appropriate to do so, with transplant |
| clinicians assessing individual cases and the current situation in their own hospital.  Transplant teams will also talk to patients awaiting a transplant operation and balance their need for a transplant against the additional challenges of being immuno-suppressed at this time. |
| Many kidney units and all pancreas units have suspended their transplant activity. Some kidney transplant centres have remained open, considering their more urgent patients on the waiting list, on a case by case basis.  Other transplant centres have begun to re-open to transplantation. This is a local decision based on the COVID-19 situation in the hospital. However, more centres are now considering re-opening as is safe and appropriate to do so to ensure patients get the transplants they need. |
| Lung transplant centres are open for urgent and super urgent patients. Patients will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Liver and heart transplant centres are also open for super-urgent and urgent patients, and all donor organ offers will be considered on case-by case basis for those patients most in need.  Reasons for suspension vary from unit to unit and can include critical care availability, staff shortages because key staff are working on the front line and the need to keep patients with and without COVID-19 separate.  We appreciate this is very difficult for patients awaiting a transplant. These decisions are not made lightly, the safety of transplant and other hospital patients is paramount.  We have asked that patients waiting for a transplant be contacted by their transplant unit to let them know of any changes which may affect them.  We are continuing to monitor the situation and are working closely with organisations |
| and colleagues across the UK.  **Is there a risk of COVID-19 being passed on through organ donation?**  There are no confirmed cases of any form of coronavirus (COVID 19) being transmitted through organ donation. |

However, every potential organ donor is being tested for COVID-19 and if someone has COVID-19 they will not be able to donate.

Although there is no known transmission of COVID-19 through organ donation, as transplant recipients have significant health problems, are going through major surgery and are immuno-suppressed, any risks are minimised as much as possible.

Fuente: NHS (United Kingdom National Health Service) (20 Julio 2020)

https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/get-involved/news/coronavirus-the-latest- updates/

https://www.odt.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/coronavirus-faqs/