

Organ donation is a gift that gives tremendous life-saving opportunities to thousands of Canadians each year. As you read these words, more than 4,000 Canadians are waiting for organs; more than 130 of them are Nova Scotians. An organ transplant will give these people a second chance to live a full life.

By choosing to be an organ and tissue donor you are creating a legacy of life, improving the health of others and giving an ongoing gift of kindness and compassion. Although your donation is anonymous, your act will forever be remembered by recipients and their families. Donation can also help families cope with the death of a loved one. At a time of grief, family and friends draw comfort from knowing that their loss has helped renew the lives of others.



### Important notes

- You can receive Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) with or without donating your organs and/or tissues. The choice is yours to make and it will not affect the quality of care that you receive
- You may choose not to proceed with donation or with MAiD at any point in this process.
- MAiD can happen at home or in the hospital. However, for organ donation, MAiD must take place at the hospital in Halifax, and close to an operating room.
- A coordinator is always available to answer any questions you, your family or your health care providers may have.



### Legacy of Life

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## Organ & Tissue Donation For Medical Assistance In Dying

Information for Patients



## What Organs and Tissues Can I Donate?

The ability to donate organs and/or tissues will depend upon your health history. Organs that may be able to be donated include kidneys, liver, heart, pancreas and lungs. Tissues that may be able to be donated include ocular tissue, heart for valves, musculoskeletal, and skin. Organs and tissues cannot be donated if you have certain diseases such as metastatic cancer. There are also specific requirements for each organ and tissue.

## Organ and Tissue Donation and MAiD

If you wish to donate your organs and/or tissues following Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD), you will need several tests. These tests assess how healthy your organs are and ensure that you do not have any diseases which could be transmitted to the organ and/or tissue recipient. Two options for completing these tests are provided below. We recognize that these options may not work for everyone. Please talk about your situation with a coordinator.



### OPTION 1

#### Step 1: Initial screening and consent

The initial screening ensures that your organs and/or tissues are healthy enough to be donated and to see if you have any infectious diseases. Screening includes:

- Medical and social history. You will be asked about illnesses and surgeries, as well as travel, drug use and sexual partners.
- Blood work (for infections such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV)
- Urine (pee) test.
- Obtaining your consent for organ and/or tissue donation.

These tests can be done either at home or in a hospital by the organ donor coordinators, who are also nurses.

#### Step 2: Further screening

Further screening ensures that your organs are healthy enough to be donated. Screening includes:

- Chest X-ray
- Echocardiogram (if heart donation is a possibility)

The chest X-ray and echocardiogram must be done in a hospital.

#### Step 3: The week before death

The initial screening tests are repeated to make sure that there have been no changes.

Testing includes:

- Medical and social history
- Physical exam
- Blood work and urine test

Once you have chosen a date for your MAiD procedure, the organ donor coordinators will arrange to visit you at home or in the hospital to repeat the history, blood work, and urine test.

#### Step 4: At the time of death

When you come to the hospital for your MAiD procedure, another chest X-ray may be needed (if lungs are being donated).

After death, your doctors will wait for five minutes and then take your body to the operating room (OR). This is similar to other donation procedures. Organ recovery is time-sensitive to ensure the safety of the organs for transplant. Tissue recovery happens once the organs have been recovered.

### OPTION 2

Come to the hospital 3-4 days before your MAiD procedure. All necessary screening can be done in 4-6 hours. You can return home the same day.