



You have the power to Donate Life



A Donate Life Organization

## **Donation After Cardiac Death (DCD): How the Process Works**

1. Patient is admitted to the hospital with a devastating brain injury and doctors determine there is no hope for recovery.
2. Doctors test the patient for brain death and find some, albeit minimal, brain function remaining. The patient, who is being maintained on a ventilator, will die once the ventilator is removed.
3. Doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, etc., realizing the patient will not recover, talk with the family about withdrawing support. The family understands there is nothing else that can be done and decides to discontinue support.
4. Hospital contacts the local organ recovery organization, as is their standard practice when they have a patient suffering from a devastating brain injury and where death is imminent.
5. Organ recovery staff reviews the patient's medical history to determine whether the patient has the medical potential to become a donor and is a candidate for donation after cardiac death (DCD). In other words, they estimate whether the patient's heart will stop beating within one hour of removal from the ventilator.
6. If the patient is deemed to be a DCD candidate, organ recovery staff offers the option of organ donation to the family and the family gives consent.
7. Hospital removes the ventilator, discontinues blood pressure and other medications, and administers sedatives as a standard comfort care measure.
8. Attending physician pronounces the patient dead five minutes after their heart stops beating as per standard medical practice.
9. Organ recovery surgery begins.