


Donating heart valves during heart transplant surgery





This leaflet gives you information about how you can help other patients by donating your heart valves when you have heart transplant surgery. Please let us know if you would like to discuss this further or if you have any questions.

Who can donate heart valves?

If you are having heart transplant surgery, you can donate the valves from your own heart. Donated heart valves can be used for children born with hearts that have not formed normally, or adults with diseased or infected valves.

Your medical and lifestyle history will be reviewed with you by a healthcare professional, by looking at your hospital records and contacting your GP. We will also take blood samples to check for viral infections. This is to ensure the safety of the patient who gets the donated heart valves, as some illnesses can be passed on.

If you have a history of any of the following, unfortunately you cannot donate your heart valves:

- previous cardiac valve surgery
- cancer (except low grade brain tumours)
- viral infections e.g. hepatitis B and C, syphilis, HTLV and HIV
- tuberculosis

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- neurological degenerative diseases (diseases that cause the nervous system to break down over time)
 - diseases where the cause is unknown.

What do I need to do?

When you visit our hospital, we will give you the opportunity to agree or disagree to donating your heart valves. We will ask you to sign a consent form to make sure that your decision is recorded in your medical records.

What happens if I give my permission but then change my mind?

You can change your mind at any point. This will not affect your medical care. If you change your mind, just speak to someone from the medical team looking after you.

Will the information be treated confidentially?

All information about your medical condition is kept strictly confidential. Personal information such as your name and address will be removed before any information is given to surgeons using the heart valves.

The patient receiving the valves will not be able to identify you.

Advantages of using human heart valves in valve replacement surgery

Many cardiac surgeons believe that using human heart valves is the best option for patients who need their heart valves replaced. This means that there is a growing demand and often a shortage of donated valves.


There is no need to match the blood and tissue types between donor and patient as there is little evidence of patients' immune systems rejecting donor valves.

Patients receiving a human heart valve do not need long-term medication to prevent their blood from clotting after surgery.

What if the heart valves are unsuitable for implantation?

If we cannot use your donated heart valves, it may be possible to use the tissue to help healthcare professionals in:

- Teaching and education of doctors, scientists and other healthcare professionals.
- Quality control and clinical audit to make sure that our standard of work stays high.

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- Medical research into heart conditions to help us understand more about heart diseases, why they happen and how to diagnose and treat them better.

We will ask your permission on the consent form for your valves to be used in this way.

Storage of heart valves

We can safely store heart valves in a special freezer for up to five years. However, most valves are used within the first year.

The heart valve bank at Royal Brompton supplies hospitals in the UK.

How can I find out more?

If you would like more information on any of the issues raised in this leaflet, please talk to someone in the medical team looking after you. You can also contact the heart valve bank on **020 7351 8460**.

If you have concerns about any aspect of the service you have received in hospital and feel unable to talk to those people responsible for your care, call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 020 7349 7715 or email pals@rbht.nhs.uk. This is a confidential service.



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إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على ترجمة فورية لمضمون هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة العربية، يرجى منك الاتصال بأحد مستخدمينا بجناح المصلحة التي يتم فيها استشفائك. أحد موظفينا سيسعى لترتيب إجراءات الترجمة وإتمامها في الوقت المناسب لك.

Brosurteki bilginin Türkçe tercumesi için tedavi görüyor olduğunuz bölüme basurunuz. Bölüm personeli tercümenin gerçekleşmesini en kısa zamanda ayaracaktır.

December 2017

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