

“Brain Death”

Is it true death?

- The use of neurological criteria to declare “brain death” was motivated by the desire to harvest the beating heart and other vital organs for transplantation, and to remove life support from patients to keep from overcrowding intensive care units of hospitals.¹
- Surveys show a wide variation in “brain death” criteria among leading neurological institutions in the United States. This means a person could be considered “brain dead” in one institution and not in another.²
- Patients, such as Madeleine Gauron, have been pronounced “brain dead” with no hope of recovery, but later recovered consciousness and are still living among us.³
- The apnea test is the most important step in determining “brain death.” An apnea test is the removal of the patient’s ventilator to determine if the patient is capable of taking in a breath on their own. In these situations, the ventilator can be turned off for up to 10 minutes. This test significantly impairs the possibility of recovery and can lead to the death of the patient through a heart attack.⁴

Patients diagnosed as “brain dead” are often capable of sensing and reacting to touch.

All neurological receptors of physical stimuli are carried to the sensory cortex in the brain where they are processed.

“Brain Dead” patients, in many cases, maintain a normal body temperature.

Body temperature is regulated by the secretion of hormones from the hypothalamus in the brain.

Children with a “brain death” diagnosis continue to grow.

Human Growth Hormone is secreted by the pituitary gland, which is controlled by the hypothalamus in the brain.

Pregnant women with a diagnosis of “brain death” are capable of carrying their child to term and producing milk for the child after birth.

Lactation occurs when the pituitary gland, controlled by the hypothalamus in the brain, secretes the hormone prolactin which helps the woman produce breast milk.

Digestion and absorption of food and many other vital activities, including a beating heart, circulation and respiration continue after a declaration of “brain death.”

Digestion and other involuntary bodily responses are controlled by the medulla oblongata, which is part of the brain stem.



¹A Definition of Irreversible Coma: Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School to Examine the Definition of Brain Death, 1968. | ²Neurology. 2008;70:284-289. | ³Lifesitenews.com, 7/5/2011. | ⁴“Brain Death” is Not Death!, 2005.