

Japan paves way for first child organ transplant

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Japan prepared on Tuesday to undertake its first organ transplant from the body of a child aged under 15, made possible by a legal amendment aiming to save the lives of many children.

The health ministry said that the child, identified only as a boy aged between 10 and 15, was declared brain-dead early on Tuesday after suffering serious [head injuries](#) in a traffic accident.

Japan's parliament in mid-2009 scrapped a ban on child organ donations, which activists said had claimed thousands of lives and forced many families to send children in need of transplants on costly overseas trips.

The new law legalising organ donations from under 15-year-olds with their family's consent took effect in July last year.

The Japan Organ Transport Network, the country's only authorised agent for organ transplants, said that the boy's relatives had agreed to the use of his heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas and small intestine for transplants.

The network said it would select recipients from a waiting list of patients.

"Japanese have travelled abroad and received transplants, and this has become a problem in the countries which admitted them," Takashi Igarashi, head of the [Japan](#) Academy of Paediatrics, told public

broadcaster NHK.

He said the unprecedented [transplant](#) was a "very important first step" but that there was a need for "continual psychological care" to the families of child [organ donors](#) after transplant.

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