

Transplants of toddler's organs save lives of four children

Judy Siegel-Itzkovich , THE JERUSALEM POST

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Four sick children who over the weekend received the heart, liver and kidneys from the body of an 18-month-old girl were in very good condition Sunday at Schneider Children's Medical Center in Petah Tikva. Halleli Walfish suffered brain death when the drapes at her day care center got caught around her neck and choked her three weeks ago. All her organs were functioning well in the bodies of their small recipients, who were breathing on their own.

Halleli died at Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Hospital. Her religious parents, who live in Tekoa, said it was natural for them to donate her organs and give life to four other children.

Tehilla, 13 months old, developed a severe heart muscle disease only four months after her birth, and her condition declined steadily. Thanks to the organ donation from the Walfish family, Tehilla became the youngest Israeli to undergo a heart transplant. Dr. Gabi Amir and Dr. George Frankel performed the surgery at Schneider. Her mother, Moran, said she would be forever grateful for the gift and that she regarded the Walfishes as family.

The next to undergo a transplant was an 18-month-old girl who suffered from acute liver failure. As she and her parents were on the way to Ben-Gurion Airport to fly to Miami for a desperate operation, they were informed that Halleli's liver had become available and turned around and headed for the hospital.

A seven-year-old girl and a three-year-old boy received the kidneys.

Schneider is one of the few children's hospitals in the world capable of performing so many organ transplants simultaneously.



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