

FAQ's About Eye and Tissue Donation

Here are some of the Frequently Asked Questions about tissue and eye donation.

Q: I wear glasses can I still donate?

A: Yes, the cornea is the clear portion in the front of the eye. Being "near-sighted" or "far-sighted" (conditions which cause the need for glasses or contacts) does not effect this window function.

Q: I have cataracts or have had surgery, can I still donate?

A: It depends each case will be evaluated on an individual basis. Even if donation for transplant is not an option, it may be possible to donate for research purposes.

Q: How successful are cornea transplants?

A: Corneal transplants are among the most successful of all transplants with a success rate greater than 85%. It is truly a gift of sight!

Q: I have heard that you can only donate if you die in an intensive care unit, is this true?

A: No. Organ donation does require the high level of medical support found in an ICU. However tissue and eye donation does NOT require any medical support. In fact tissue and eye donations can occur even if the donor has occurred outside of a hospital.

Q: I'm not familiar with tissue and eye donation, what can be donated?

A: Eye donation can involve either the whole eye or just the cornea. Tissue donation can be for heart valves, bones, tendons, ligaments, vessels and skin.

Q: What are the valves in the heart used for?

A: When patients have heart valve problems it is sometimes possible to repair this by using a donated heart valve. Due to congenital abnormalities, children frequently need heart valve replacements.

Q: Does skin transplantation need to be race specific?

A: No. During skin procurement, a split-thickness layer of skin, approximately the thickness of two sheets of paper, is taken for grafting to burns and other soft-tissue injuries. The re-

recipient contributes the pigment to the skin as the wound heals.

Q: What is the most common type of transplant?

A: Bone grafts are used daily in hospitals, surgical centers and dental offices. Bone transplantation does not require extensive anti-rejection drug use.

Q: Will my past medical history be an issue?

A: Yes. The family will be asked to provide information on past medical history and tests will be performed to assure recipient safety.

Q: Does donation effect funeral arrangements?

A: Donation is handled with the same surgical skill as if the person were alive. In addition extreme care is taken with the restoration so that the family's funeral arrangements need not be effected. During the whole process the donor is treated with dignity and respect.

Q: How much time does it take for a donation to be completed?

A: An eye only donation takes only an hour to complete once the procedure begins. A full eye and tissue donor takes eight hours. Tissue collection agencies work closely with the family and funeral homes to ensure time parameters are understood and constraints met.

Q: Is there any cost to donate?

A: No. There is no cost to the donor's family as the result of donation. If there were previous hospital charges incurred during the patients treatment, these remain the responsibility of the donor's family or estate. In addition, funeral costs and arrangements remain the responsibility of the family.

Q: What do religions think of donation?

A: All major religions support donation. In fact, the major Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu and Moslem religions encourage donation.

**SHARE YOUR LIFE,
SHARE YOUR DECISION!**

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