



*Better
Together*

Patient information

The Gift of Sight – Information for Eye Donors and Relatives

St. Paul's Eye Unit

Over 3000 corneal grafts are performed each year in the United Kingdom. To be able to perform these sight-saving operations, we rely on the donation of eyes.

We appreciate that the loss of a loved one is a difficult time for family and friends to have to face difficult decisions about organ donation, but if you agree, you will be giving the gift of sight to two other people, for whom that gift may lead to a miraculous improvement in sight. Your gift is a lasting and valuable memorial.

Your questions answered

Why should you consider eye donation?

A corneal transplant (graft) is a wonderful gift that can help restore sight to someone blinded by corneal damage or disease. It may enable them to see again or may relieve severe eye pain. Sometimes, a successful transplant can restore independence to a housebound person.

At present the demand for corneal grafts far outnumbers the supply.

What is the cornea?

The cornea is the clear window in front of the iris (the coloured part of the eye). It must be transparent for normal sight. However it is delicate and can easily be damaged, by injury or disease.

Similar to blood donation, blood tests must be performed and questions asked to ensure that there is no infection present. It is very important to ensure that the person who receives the cornea does not acquire any known infection or disease.

Will the person who receives the transplant know who is the donor?

No, complete confidentiality is maintained, both for the recipient and for the relatives of the donor. Relatives of the donor may enquire about whether or not the eyes have been used, but cannot know more information than this.

Can anything other than the eyes be used for transplantation?

Yes, certain tissues, such as heart valves, bone and skin, may also be removed after death and benefit people suffering a variety of other diseases and problems. The transplant co-ordinator can give you more information.

How can a donation be made?

You can register to be a corneal donor whilst you are still alive. You can obtain registration forms from doctors' surgeries, chemists and libraries, or by telephoning free of charge on 0800 555 777.

Thank you for reading this leaflet and **considering** donation. Your generosity could lead to a miracle for someone who is blind and also aid in the campaign against blindness.

Further information

The Corneal Transplant Co-ordinator
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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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