

Tissue Donation

**Information for families
about giving the gift of
tissue donation**



Jo's mum helped to restore
the sight of two people by
donating her corneas

**This hospital supports
tissue donation**

www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/tissuedonation

Tissue donation gives many families the opportunity to make a difference to others.


We would like to offer this choice to you.

Every year, thousands of lives are saved and improved through organ donation. However further lives can be transformed through tissue donation.

Tissue such as skin, bone and heart valves can save and dramatically improve the quality of life for others. Cornea donation can enable people to see again.

A Specialist Nurse from NHS Blood and Transplant may contact you to offer the option of tissue donation for your relative. The Nurse will be able to answer any questions you might have, to help you to decide if tissue donation is what your relative would have wanted. The Nurse will call you within a few hours of your relative dying. This is necessary to enable donation to be possible.

This hospital supports tissue donation and we want to give all families the opportunity to fulfil patient's wishes.



Doreen's Story



Doreen with her grandson.

Doreen was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in February 2012, aged 67. When she passed away just a few months later she donated her corneas. Her daughter Jo said: "Mum had always carried a donor card and used to say 'they will be no good to me when I am gone'.

"I did struggle a bit with the donation of her corneas. But the night before she died I picked up her purse and her donor card fell out – it was like: 'Right, this is going to happen!'"

Jo was told afterwards that her mum's corneas had helped to restore the sight of two people.

"I really did get a lot of comfort from that and a sense of pride; fulfilling someone's wish, it's the last thing you can do for them. To know there was some part of her still walking around, she would be really pleased."

Nicole's Story

Nicole was diagnosed aged 25 with Fuchs dystrophy and by 28, while she was pregnant, she lost vision in her right eye.

In April 2017, Nicole received her cornea transplant.

"I keep telling everyone about my incredible surgery. I can't believe how my life has changed



and the black cloud above me has disappeared.

“I have my donor in my thoughts each day. Cornea donation has enabled me to live my life to the full, work, and see my daughter grow up.”

Which tissues can be donated?

Eyes – donating sight can enable people to see again. The cornea, the clear tissue at the front of the eye, can be transplanted to restore the sight of patients who have lost their vision due to damage caused by disease or injury, or defects from birth. Most people can donate their corneas, age or poor eyesight does not necessarily stop people from donating.

Heart valves – help to save the lives of children born with heart defects and adults with damaged heart valves.

Skin – can be used as a natural dressing, helping to treat people with serious burns to stop infection and survive their injuries, as well as helping to reduce scarring and pain.

Bone – is important for people receiving artificial joint replacements, or replacing bone that has been removed due to illness or injury.

Tendons – help repair or replace damaged tendons or ligaments which enable people to move more easily.

Can we choose which tissue to donate?

Yes. Only those tissues you have given permission for will be donated.

Can anyone become a tissue donor?

Almost anyone can be considered as a tissue donor. There are some rare exemptions.

To ensure that all donated tissues are safe, the donor's medical and lifestyle history is assessed, similar to blood donors, to protect the person receiving the tissue from infection.

How long after death can tissue be donated?

Tissue is normally donated within 24 hours after a patient has died. However, sometimes it is possible to donate up to 48 hours after death.

Can you tell if a patient has been a tissue donor?

Throughout the donation the donor is treated with respect and dignity. After donation our specialist team will ensure the donor maintains a natural appearance. You may see your relative after they have donated before they are laid to rest, if you wish.

Will tissue donation interfere with funeral arrangements?

Donation will not delay any funeral arrangements.

After donation will we receive any information?

Yes, with permission, an NHS Blood and Transplant nurse will write a thank you letter and provide information about the donation.

Further information

If you do not want to be contacted by one of our Specialist Nurses to discuss tissue donation please inform us as soon as you can by calling the National Referral Centre.

If you would like to discuss tissue donation in more detail or you have any further questions, you can contact a Specialist Nurse at the National Referral Centre.

National Referral Centre

0800 432 0559 (Freephone)

www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/tissuedonation

