

Eye donation for corneal transplant

This factsheet is for guidance only and has been produced with assistance from healthcare professionals

Eye donation – giving someone the gift of sight

From our experience at the Hospice we know that eye/tissue donation can help patients and families feel comforted with knowledge that they have given hope to others, and that some good has come out of their loss. However, we also realise that not everyone feels comfortable with taking such a step.

We hope that this information can help if you are unsure whether this is possible for you or are unaware of what is involved.

Here are some facts that may help you make up your mind:

- Although people with cancer cannot donate internal organs (like hearts and lungs) after death, they can sometimes donate their corneas (the transparent tissue that covers the front of the eye).
- The donation of a cornea will enable someone's sight to be restored or improved.
- There are many patients, both young and old, who would benefit from cornea donation.

What do I need to do if I wish to donate my corneas?

- Tell your closest family and friends about your decision.
- Talk to a LOROS doctor or senior nurse.
- Tell your GP.

Since May 2020, the law in England regards all adults as agreeing to be an organ donor unless they specifically 'opt out' by recording a decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register or are exempt.

If you do not record a decision on the Register or let your family know your wishes, it will be assumed if you die in England that you consent to donating your corneas or other organs.

Donation Process

- After you have died one of our staff, your next of kin or your GP will need to contact the National Blood and Transplant Donor Service.
- The Specialist Nurse co-ordinator from this service will return the call, contact your next of kin and obtain further information about your medical history.
- They will need to obtain your next of kin's consent before the donation can go ahead.
- The removal of the eyes is carried out with the same care and respect as any other procedures. This may be carried out at the Hospice or Funeral Directors. This does not prevent relatives saying goodbye or affect funeral arrangements.

What other tissues can be donated?

People dying from other conditions other than cancer may also be able to donate other tissues:

- Bone
- Heart Valves
- Skin
- Tendons
- Cartilage
- Femoral Arteries

Referrals and consent are the same for the eye donation, but your body will need to be transferred to a local mortuary to enable retrieval. The cost of transportation would be met by NHS Blood and Transplant.

How you can find out more

Further information about organ donation in England, exemptions, how to register or opt out can be found at organdonation.nhs.uk. Or you can call 0300 123 23 23.

Information is also available in accessible formats and non-English languages.

LOROS Hospice is dedicated to ensuring equality and diversity is at the core of all our activities.

All LOROS publications are reviewed regularly. This factsheet was updated in February 2022. For the most up to date information please visit loros.co.uk/care

In cases of comments or complaints, please contact:

Chief Executive or Director of Patient Services and Clinical Quality
LOROS, Groby Road, Leicester. LE3 9QE

or

Care Quality Commission, East Midlands Office, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle Upon Tyne.
NE1 4PA

Alternative language copies available:

If you would like this factsheet in another language or format, please contact the Patient Experience Lead PA on (0116) 231 8435

LOROS Groby Road, Leicester LE3 9QE

 (0116) 231 3771

 info@loros.co.uk

 @LOROShospice

 /LOROShospice

loros.co.uk

Registered Charity No: 506120

© LOROS. – Feb 2022 To be reviewed Feb 2025

LOROS
Hospice Care for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland

Being there for you
and your family