

Ontario's Referral and Listing Criteria for Corneal Transplantation

PATIENT REFERRAL CRITERIA

The patient referral criteria are guidelines which a medical practitioner would utilize to refer a patient to an ophthalmologist for assessment. The criteria identified below are the agreed upon conditions for which a patient should be referred for consultation or referred for corneal transplant assessment.

- 1) **Optical:** Referral for corneal transplantation should be considered for patients who require restoration of corneal structure or function, or to improve visual performance.
- 2) **Reconstructive and Therapeutic:** Referral for corneal transplantation should be considered for patients that require maintenance or restoration of the physical integrity of the eye. Referral should also be considered for the following:
 - Removal of diseased tissue that would otherwise lead to further damage to the eye or body;
 - To relieve pain;
 - If a transplant will provide psychosocial benefits;
 - Excision of tissue for diagnosis;
 - Replacement of opacified, abnormal or absent corneal tissue to allow visualization of intraocular structures for, or during intraocular surgery.

PATIENT LISTING INDICATIONS

Each patient is assessed individually for their suitability for corneal transplantation by the transplant surgeon. Eligibility for corneal transplantation should be determined on medical and surgical grounds. Criteria for eligibility should be transparent and made available to patients and the public. Eligibility should not be based on social status, gender, race, age alone, or personal or public appeal.

The criteria identified below are the agreed upon conditions for which a patient may be eligible to be waitlisted for corneal transplantation in Ontario.

- 1) **Poor Vision:** Listing for transplant may be considered for patients with vision that will be maintained or improved by corneal transplantation, or if vision is interfering with activities of daily living. Conditions contributing to poor vision may include:
 - Clouding of the cornea;
 - Thinning of the cornea;
 - Corneal dystrophies and perforations; or,
 - Other corneal diseases.



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- 2) **Perforation or Threatened Perforation:** Listing for transplant may be considered for patients with actual or threatened corneal perforation, or uncontrolled disease that would lead to loss of the eye or unrecoverable loss of vision without corneal transplantation (e.g. overwhelming infection).
 - 3) **Pain:** Listing for transplant may be considered for patients with pain not amenable to medical treatment.

ABSOLUTE LISTING CONTRAINDICATIONS

The following are conditions relating to the corneal transplant candidate that constitute absolute contraindications to corneal transplantation. As such, they prevent a transplant from being done until the condition is resolved.

- 1) **Predicted Outcome:** Patients are not candidates for corneal transplantation when the transplant will be unlikely to lead to:
 - Restoration of corneal function;
 - Restoration of corneal integrity;
 - Removal of diseased tissue that would otherwise lead to further damage to the eye; or
 - Psychosocial benefits.
- 2) **Consent:** Patients who do not want a transplant, or who are unable to give informed consent and no substitute decision maker is available, are not candidates for transplantation.

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