

Writing to Transplant Recipients – Fact Sheet

Making the Decision to Write to Transplant Recipients

The decision to write to transplant recipients is a personal one. You should never feel obligated to write. Sharing information about your loved one may help in the grieving process. It is completely up to you, there is no pressure to correspond if you do not wish to.

There is no time limit for corresponding – you may write at any time. If it is more comfortable, you may choose to send a card during a holiday time, or a ‘thinking of you’ card instead of a letter.

If you decide to write, here are some guidelines to help you:

Provide General Information

Write about your loved one’s interests, hobbies or perhaps special things they liked (maybe even their favourite foods)

- You may include your loved one’s gender and life stage (i.e. infant, child, adult, middle-aged etc.)

Carefully consider whether to include religious comments as the views of the recipient’s family are unknown.

Here are a few sample phrases to help you get started:

Being able to communicate with you brings some happiness to our sorrow. Please know that we feel very blessed to have had the opportunity to donate our loved one’s organs and to help someone in need.

We, as a family, are pleased with our decision to donate. We are happy to carry out our loved one’s wishes to become an organ and tissue donor.

I hope this letter finds you well on the road to recovery. If you wish, please write and let us know how you are doing.

Closing your card or letter

- Sign your card or letter “the donor family” or “your donor’s wife”, “your donor’s mom” etc.
- Do not reveal your address, city, or telephone number
- Do not reveal the name of your hospital in which your loved one was a patient

Mailing your card or letter

- Place your card or letter in an unsealed envelope
- Include on a separate piece of paper
 - Your full name and relationship
 - Your loved one’s full name
 - Date and place of donation

Please mail both documents in a sealed envelope to:

Trillium Gift of Life Network
Attn: Donor Family Services
483 Bay Street
South Tower, 4th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

The Donor Family Services Department will review the card or letter to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. It will then be forwarded to the transplant coordinator who will send it to the recipient.

Please allow a couple of weeks for this to be completed.

Will I hear from the transplant recipients?

While you may wish to correspond with a transplant recipient, it is also their personal choice to reply to you. Many recipients have said they are overwhelmed with emotion and have difficulty expressing their gratitude in words. Others may take several months or even years before they feel comfortable writing to their donor family. A letter from their donor's family may encourage and motivate the recipients to write a letter of thanks, knowing that the donor family is ready to receive a communication in return.

Having difficulties, or need some advice?

If you are having difficulties in writing your letter or have any questions about anything that you wish to include in your letter, please do not hesitate to call and ask to speak with the Donor Family Services Department, who will be happy to assist you in any way possible.

For more information:

Trillium Gift of Life Network
Attn: Donor Family Services
483 Bay Street
South Tower, 4th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

Phone: 416-619-2313

Email: FamilyServices@giftoflife.on.ca

Toll-Free Information Line:

1-800-263-2833

www.giftoflife.on.ca