

## The Tissue Donation Process:

1. The hospital or coroner calls Trillium Gift of Life Network to notify a patient has died.
2. A TGLN Coordinator screens the patient to determine if they are eligible for this unique opportunity
3. If eligible, a TGLN Coordinator guides the family through the consent process via telephone. When available, the registered consent on the patient's Registered Consent Decision is always shared.
4. An interview regarding the donor's medical and social history – similar to one completed when donating blood – is completed with family/friends.
5. Blood sampling on the donor is completed to ensure that the donor's gift is safe for transplantation.
6. Recovery of tissue is carried out within 12 to 24 hours after death.

TGLN is involved every step of the way to ensure the process runs smoothly and is available to answer any additional questions your family may have.

## Do I Get to Know Who Was Helped By The Tissue?

For some donor families, it is important for them to learn how their loved one's gift saved or transformed lives. TGLN will do its best to obtain this information on how the person was helped for a donor's family, if requested.

## Is This Confidential?

Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) will maintain the donor's and the donor family's anonymity just as the transplant hospitals will maintain the anonymity of the grateful recipients.

## Who We Are About Us

For general information regarding organ and tissue donation, such as how to register your consent to donate, please visit our website at [www.giftoflife.on.ca](http://www.giftoflife.on.ca).

**REMEMBER** – your decision can make a difference. Register your consent to donate, and talk to your family – let them know you want to give the gift of life.

**Trillium Gift of Life Network gratefully acknowledges our partners in supporting tissue donation:**

Sunnybrook Blood and Tissue Bank

Hospital for Sick Children Tissue Laboratory

Mount Sinai Allograft Technologies

Eye Bank of Canada (Ontario Division)

Lake Superior Centre for Regenerative  
Medicine (RegenMed)



Trillium  
Gift of Life  
Network

# The Gift of Tissue Donation: Saving and Transforming Lives



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At the end of a loved one's life, you and your family face many decisions. One of these decisions may be the opportunity to help others through the gift of tissue donation. Donation is a generous and selfless act that benefits others.

Thousands of Ontarians require tissue transplants each year. For these people, a tissue transplant could mean a new beginning.

Whether honoring your loved ones decision to donate, or making this decision on their behalf, families who have donated have said tissue donation has provided comfort in their path to healing.

“ I remember my beloved husband as a great friend and an excellent father and a remarkable member of the community. I will always remember him for his sense of humour and his eagerness to help others. I feel comforted that even after death part of him lives in others. ”

– Wife of a tissue donor

**One tissue donor  
can save and  
transform the  
lives of up to 75 different people**



## Who Can Become a Donor?

Most people have the potential to help others through the gift of tissue donation.

## What Tissues May Be Donated?

### EYES: restore sight

**Cornea (the outermost layer of the eye):** is used to restore vision caused by disease, accidents, infection or aging.

**Sclera (the white part of the eye):** can be used as a patch to repair eye injuries from trauma, treat glaucoma, and to reconstruct the whole eye.

### HEART: life-saving heart repair surgeries

**Heart Valves:** are used to replace heart valves that are diseased or damaged. This allows the recipients, many of who are children and young women, be able to live normal healthy lives.

**Pericardium (the protective sac around the heart):** is used in a variety of surgeries including repairs to defects in the walls of blood vessels in children, and as a patch in brain surgery.

### SKIN: helps burn patients survive

Only a very fine layer of skin (as thin as a sheet of wrapping paper) is recovered from a person's back. In some people, this may leave the appearance of a sunburn.

Donated skin is used for severe burns by covering the wound and to help prevent serious infections. The skin graft can be lifesaving for someone who has burns that cover large areas of their body.

## BONE AND CONNECTIVE TISSUE: bone repair & restored mobility

**Bones:** can be used for reconstructive surgeries, joint replacements, spinal surgeries, sports medicine or even dental procedures.

**Connective Tissue (tendons and ligaments):** are used in a variety of surgeries including reconstructive surgeries. These can help people walk, run, and live their life.

“ Because of an eye disease called Keratoconus, I had gone completely blind by the time I was 26. After waiting about 9 months, I was given the most extraordinary gift that one could ever receive – a beautiful healthy cornea that someone had so generously donated. Since then, my vision has been restored and the world is looking just lovely. I will never be able to sufficiently thank the angels that have given me back my life. Because of the donor and his/her family, I now see sunsets, the snow dancing on the tree tops, my mother's smile. ”

– Grateful cornea recipient

## Does Tissue Donation Affect Funeral Plans?

Surgeries are completed with respect and dignity by trained professionals. Reconstruction is provided and typically does not delay funeral arrangements or affect open casket viewing.