

Case Study

Mrs A had been an In-Patient at the Hospice on several occasions the last being for end of life care. The windows of her room looked out onto the courtyard and she would often remark about the colours of the flowers there. During conversations with members of the ward team corneal donation was discussed. Mrs A thought that because she had cancer she would be unable to donate her corneas. We reassured her that she may be able to. She discussed this with her family who supported her wishes and Mrs A signed a consent form. When Mrs A died her corneas were donated.

Two weeks later her family received a letter informing them that Mrs A's corneas had been transplanted and two peoples' sight had been restored.

This gave Mrs A's family great comfort.

Do I have to pay for services from the Hospice?

No, all services offered at the Hospice are free. As a charity we are dependent on the local community for financial support.

We receive just 16% of our funding from the NHS. If you would like to make a donation to the Hospice please ask a member of staff or visit our website.

Interesting facts about Corneal Donation

- Last year (06-07) 2,403 people had their sight restored by cornea transplants in the UK.
- The oldest recorded cornea donor was 103.
- 24% of organ donors also donate corneas.
- Cornea transplants are successful sight saving operations with 93% of grafts functioning after one year. By 5 years 72% of grafts are still functioning and many continue for many years after that.
- 65% of corneal-only donors are over 60 years old. Unlike solid organs, corneas can be donated for up to 24 hours after death.
- The NHS organ donor register invites people to specify which organs they would like to donate. In March 2005, 90% of people joining the register indicated a willingness to donate all organs and tissue. Only 7.2% declined to offer their corneas.

Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice



Corneal Donation



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The purpose of this leaflet is raise awareness of the importance of eye donation and to answer questions frequently asked.

What is a cornea?

This is the outer layer of the eye. The function of the outer layer is protective and gives shape to the eyeball. The cornea allows light to pass through the lens of the eye.

Why do people need cornea transplants?

The cornea can become damaged by trauma or disease. When this occurs the light is unable to pass through the lens. This has sight-limiting results and some people loose their sight completely.

Then what?

If there is a donated cornea available the damaged cornea can be removed and the donated one transplanted.

Who can donate their corneas?

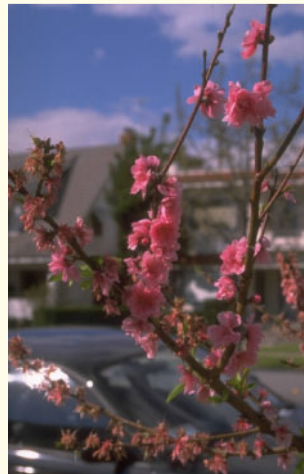
Anyone can offer to donate his or her corneas. There are however some restrictions where they cannot be used. However cornea donation can benefit research into eye disease even when the corneas cannot be used.

What do I do if I wish to donate?

A member of the medical or nursing team at the Hospice or your Clinical Nurse Specialist may ask you if you have a donor card and whether you wish to consider eye donation.
If not please mention it to them.

What happens if I decide I want to donate my corneas?

You will be asked to sign a consent form. Attached to this form will be a list of exemptions to eye donation.
The nurse will be happy to go through this with you.



What if I change my mind?

You can withdraw from eye donation any time. There is no obligation even if you have signed the form of consent.

What happens when I donate my eyes?

If you die at the Hospice a member of the Nursing team will be responsible for making the necessary arrangements.

If you are in a hospital you need to make sure the medical and nursing team knows your wishes. Ask them to document your request in your medical notes.

If you are at home make sure your G.P. and District Nurse are aware of your wishes so that they can make the necessary arrangements.

Will my next of kin need to do anything?

It is important that your next of kin are aware of your wishes.

A member of the transplant team will contact them on your death to confirm eye donation.
Your G.P. will also be contacted.
Your next of kin will receive a letter approximately 2 weeks after the donation thanking them.

Where can I get more information?

If you have further questions or concerns a member of the Medical or Nursing team will be available to help.

Alternatively the transplant unit has a Help line on Tel: 0845 6060 400.

Or visit their website on www.transplant.nhs.org