



What is Tissue Donation?

Tissue transplantation is one of the great success stories of modern medicine. Although less widely publicized than organ transplants, procedures utilizing donated human tissues affect over a million people in the United States each year.

Surgeons routinely use donated musculoskeletal tissue to replace bone, tendons and ligaments lost to cancer, trauma, joint disease, arthritis and other conditions. For severe burn patients, skin can make the difference between life and death. Skin can also be used to repair deep dermal defects due to injury or birth defects and for gynecological and urological repairs. Heart valves can replace damaged ones, allowing the heart to function again.

*This brochure has been prepared
as a public service by the
Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation,
a non-profit service organization
dedicated to providing
quality tissue through a commitment
to excellence in education,
research, recovery and care
for recipients, donors
and their families.*

MTF Musculoskeletal
Transplant
Foundation

Tissue Services

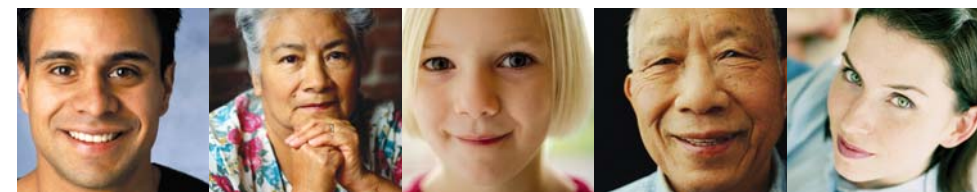
125 May Street • Edison, NJ 08837
Telephone: 800-946-9008
www.mtf.org



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Changing Lives



UNDERSTANDING TISSUE DONATION



WHEN DOES THE DONATION OCCUR & WHAT CAN BE DONATED?

Tissues can be donated upon one's death to others in serious need. Tissue donation is often included when someone is an organ donor, or if the criteria for organ donation has not been met. Tissue

donation is an option for most individuals.

Tissues which can be donated include bone, tendons, ligaments, heart valves, skin, veins, cartilage, pericardium and fascia lata (the thin covering of the muscles).

ARE THERE HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR DONATION?

Most healthy individuals are candidates for donation. Infectious diseases such as HIV or hepatitis do rule out the option of donation. Testing and medical histories are used to determine final acceptance of each donor. In some cases, age may be a factor.

Donor criteria changes frequently and only a donation agency should rule out the opportunity to donate.



HOW IS DONATION ACCOMPLISHED?

After consent for donation has been established, the donated tissues are removed by skilled medical professionals. Donation is a surgical procedure that takes place under sterile conditions. During the donation procedures, the utmost care and respect is taken with the donor's body.

The donation team is always completely separate from the physicians who treat the patient prior to death.



WHAT ABOUT FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS?

When the removal of the donated tissue is completed, the body is restored to its natural appearance. Donation should not interfere with funeral arrangements, including open casket

services. Donation of tissues and organs is accomplished in a very timely manner, usually in less than 12–24 hours.

WHO RECEIVES THE DONATED TISSUES?

Selection of transplant recipients is also based on standards which include medical criteria and need. Tissue recipients range from the very young to the seniors of our society. They are patients whose needs range from a large graft to prevent amputation to very small grafts for spinal surgery. Tissue recipients' lives have often been restricted due to pain and immobility. The gift of donated tissues allows them to return to healthy active lives.

HOW CAN SOMEONE BE A DONOR?

Basically, anyone who expresses the desire to donate is a potential tissue donor. In common practice, the individual's immediate family is approached for consent. However, in some states, driver licenses and donor cards are considered irrevocable legal documents, and can stand as a legal first person consent, without needing the consent of the next of kin. Some states also have donor registries. Individuals who wish to donate can sign up on the donor registry, which in most cases, is also a legal first person consent. Even then, it is important to let your family know of your wishes to donate.



To learn more about donation, or a donor registry in your state, go to www.donatelife.net.