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TISSUE TRANSPLANT

A PATIENT GUIDE



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What are human tissues for transplant?

Human tissues for transplant come from tissue donors. They go through many steps and tests before they are ready for transplant. Tests are done for infectious diseases and they are checked to make sure that the tissues can do what the surgeon wants them to. Some types of donor tissues are sclera, corneas, skin, bone, tendon, fascia, meniscus, and heart valves.

- **Corneas** (part of the eye) help give back sight to patients who have lost their sight due to disease or damage.
- **Sclera grafts** (from the white part of the eye) can treat eye injuries.
- **Skin grafts** can treat burns.
- **Bone grafts** are used in hip surgery or in some dental surgeries.
- **Tendon** (joins muscle to bone) **grafts** are used in ligament (joins bone to bone) repairs.
- **Fascia** (connective tissue) can be used to hold up the bladder.
- **Meniscus grafts** (part of the knee) can replace those that have been damaged.
- **Heart valves** can replace valves that are damaged or diseased.



Where do these tissues come from?

These tissues come from people who have died and they, or their family, have agreed to donation. Donors are carefully screened to make sure they are able to donate. Tests are done on their blood to make sure they don't have any diseases that could be passed on. Their medical records are reviewed to make sure there is nothing that would stop them from donating. We want to be sure that donors have no medical or lifestyle issues in their past that could have put them at high risk for infectious diseases, infections, and other risks.

What are donor tissues screened for?

Blood tests are done on tissue donors to check for many diseases that could be passed on at the time of transplant if present. These tests are necessary under Federal law. These include tests for:

- HIV
- Hepatitis B and C
- Syphilis
- West Nile Virus

What are the risks?

As with any medical procedure, there are risks that come with getting a tissue transplant. These may include:

- Infection.
- A disease (not found during testing) passes from the tissue to your body.

While the chance of these things happening is very low, you should talk about them with your family doctor or transplanting surgeon. Be sure to ask questions if you are worried about this.

Are there other choices?

There may be other products available that **do not come from tissue donors and do not contain human cells**. These products aren't always available. It depends on the type of surgery you need. If you are worried about the use of human tissues you can ask your doctor about other choices.

What is informed consent?

Before you receive a tissue transplant, a doctor will talk with you about the risks and benefits. The doctor will then ask for your permission. Please ask questions if there is any part of your treatment you do not understand.

I have decided to go ahead with the transplant. Now what?

You've decided to have surgery that involves having a transplant of donor tissue. It is possible to have an unwanted reaction to the transplant after surgery. These reactions are called transplantation adverse reactions. On the next few pages are:

- some things you should expect after your transplant,
- some definitions of what an adverse reaction is,
 - how to tell if you may be having one and
 - what you should do if you think you are having one.

What can I expect after surgery?

After your transplant surgery, it is normal to have some pain or soreness for a few days. How much will depend on what type of surgery you had. Pain that gets worse, instead of better, may be a sign of an adverse reaction. It could also be a sign of problems not related to your transplant. You may also feel tired for a few days after your surgery. After you are put to sleep for surgery, it is normal to wake up with an upset stomach and a sore throat.

What is a transplantation adverse reaction?

There are different types of adverse reactions that can happen after tissue transplants. It is any type of unwanted reaction you may have that is directly related to your transplant. These may include things like infections. All of these types of reactions are very rare.

Some reactions that can happen after transplants of

CORNEAS

Type of adverse reaction	Symptoms
Infection means the growth of a germ or a virus in your body that is not normal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever (your temperature is above 38 degrees Celsius or 100 degrees Fahrenheit)• Redness around your incision• Swelling at the incision• Pain
Primary graft failure means your new cornea didn't work properly soon after transplant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blurry or hazy vision• Teary eyes• Redness of the eye
Rejection means that your immune system knows the new cornea is foreign and is responding to it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redness• Pain• Sensitivity to light• Reduced vision
Dislodging of the graft means that your new cornea has moved away from where the surgeon placed it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain• Blurry vision

Some reactions that can happen after transplants of

BONE, TENDON AND CONNECTIVE TISSUE

Type of adverse reaction	Symptoms
Infection means the growth of a germ or a virus in your body that is not normal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever (your temperature is above 38 degrees Celsius or 100 degrees Fahrenheit)• Redness around your incision• Swelling at the incision• Pain
Wearing down of your own bone tissue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain where the surgery was done• Swelling• Joint deformity
A break or crack in the bone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain around the fracture.• Unable to use the joint, arm or leg• Swelling• Deformity, usually a lump• A feeling of grinding at the site of the fracture
Transplanted donor bone hasn't joined with your own natural bone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain around the incision

Some reactions that can happen after transplants of

HEART VALVES

Type of adverse reaction	Symptoms
Infection means the growth of a germ or a virus in your body that is not normal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever (your temperature is above 38 degrees Celsius or 100 degrees Fahrenheit)• Redness around your incision• Swelling at the incision• Pain
Blood clot forms in or around the donor valve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irregular heart beat• Shortness of breath• Weakness• Chest pain
Swelling of the inner layer of the heart.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever• Feeling tired• Headaches
The valve fails to work properly following transplant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortness of breath• Chest pain• Feeling weak

These are just some of the types of reactions that can happen with a tissue transplant. There are other types of unwanted reactions. Always check with your doctor if you have any symptoms that you think are not normal after surgery.

What should I do if I think I am having an adverse reaction?

- » Call your doctor's office right away. Tell your doctor about your symptoms. Your doctor will be able to tell you what to do.
- » If you can't get a hold of your family doctor, call your surgeon's office. Explain your symptoms. They may tell you to come to their office or go to the Emergency Room right away.
- » If you start having symptoms during the night, go to the Emergency Room right away. Sometimes an unwanted reaction can get worse very fast. Don't wait to get treatment.

