

Patient information

Corneal Donation – Your Questions Answered

St Pauls Eye Department – Royal Liverpool Hospital

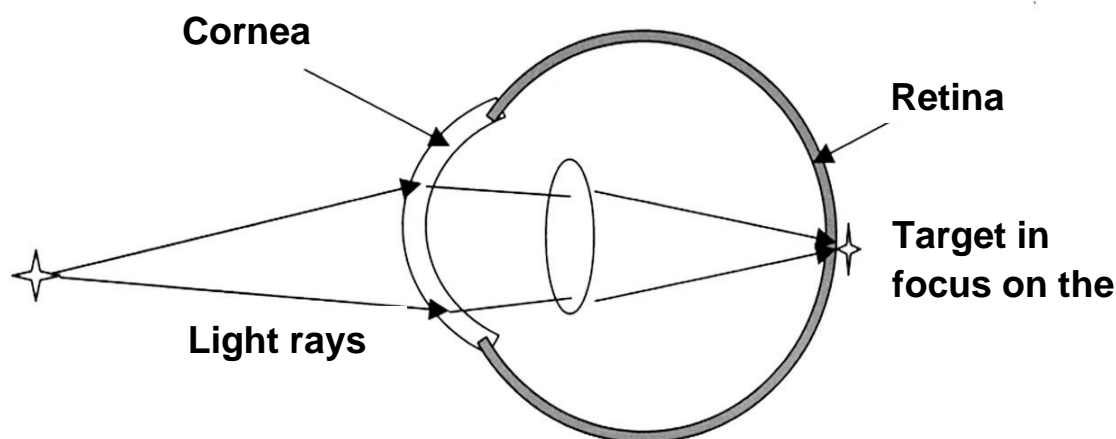
Why should you donate?

A corneal transplant (graft) is a wonderful gift which can help restore sight to someone who has been blinded by corneal damage or disease. It may enable them to see again or may relieve severe eye pain. Sometimes, a successful transplant can restore independence to a housebound person.

Tragically the demand for corneal grafts is steadily increasing and far outnumbers the supply.

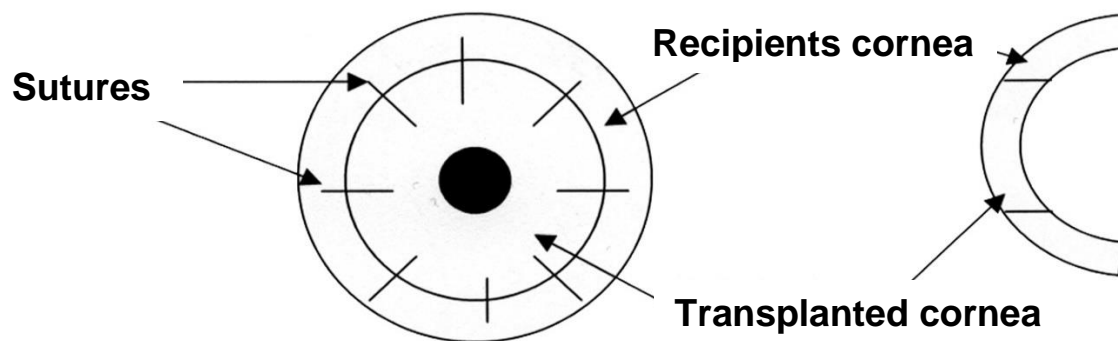
What is the cornea?

The cornea is the clear window in front of the iris (the coloured part of the eye). It must be transparent for normal sight. However, it is very delicate and can easily be damaged by injury or disease.



What is a cornea transplant?

The abnormal cornea is removed and replaced by the donor cornea. It is kept in place with very thin stitches. These stitches are almost invisible. The transplant does not change the colour of the eye.



Is transplantation successful?

Using modern surgical methods and drugs to control rejection, corneal transplantation is very successful. In most cases, more than 90% work.

Who will benefit from a corneal transplant?

People ranging from the very young to the very old receive corneal transplants. Even tiny children sometimes require a transplant!

Why is it necessary to remove the whole eye?

There is a high risk of spreading infection to the cornea as it is removed and of causing damage to its delicate surfaces. It is much safer to remove the whole eye first and then remove the cornea in a special room with special instruments.

What will happen to the rest of the eye?

Other parts of the eye can also be used in other types of transplant operations.

Any part not used for surgery can be used for research by scientists in our internationally renowned laboratories. Valuable information from even a normal eye can be used to help us in the battle to prevent blindness. None of the eye tissue will be wasted.

Can anyone donate their eyes?

There are very few people who cannot be donors. Unlike most other organs, such as kidneys and hearts, the corneas can be donated long after death (up to 24 hours).

Should donors have perfect sight?

No. Wearing glasses is not a reason not to be a corneal donor.

When will the eyes be collected?

The eyes can be retrieved anytime within the first 24 hours of death. Specially trained people can carry the retrieval out anywhere. It does not have to be done in an operating theatre.

Will there be any facial disfigurement?

No. Cosmetically there will be no change. The eyelids will be closed.

What happens to the eyes after they have been removed?

The corneas will be stored in a special fluid, which keeps them healthy in an eye bank for up to 30 days until they are required.

How can a donation be made?

You can register to be a corneal donor whilst you are still alive. You can obtain registration forms from doctors' surgeries, chemists or libraries or by telephoning free of charge on 0800 555 777. The Corneal Nurse at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital can answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for reading this leaflet and considering a donation. Your generosity could lead to a miracle for someone who is blind and also aid in the campaign against blindness.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

The Corneal Nurse

Tel: 0151 706 2000 ask for bleep 732

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2000 Bleep 732

Author: St Paul's Eye Department

Review date: April 2026

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

يمكن توفير جميع المعلومات المتعلقة بالمرضى الموافق عليهم من قبل انتمان المستشفى عند الطلب بصيغ أخرى، بما في ذلك لغات أخرى وبطرق تسهل قراءتها وبالحروف الطباعة الكبيرة وبالصوت وبطريقة برايل للمكفوفين وبطريقة مون والكترونياً.

所有經信托基金批准的患者資訊均可以其它格式提供，包括其它語言、易讀閱讀軟件、大字

體、音頻、盲文、穆恩體 (Moon) 盲文和電子格式，敬請索取。

در صورت تمایل میتوانید کلیه اطلاعات تصویب شده توسط اتحادیه در رابطه با بیماران را به اشکال مختلف در دسترس داشته باشید، از جمله به زبانهای دیگر، به زبان ساده، چاپ درشت، صوت، خط مخصوص کوران، مون و بصورت روی خطی موجود است.

زانیاری پیوندیدار بهو نهخوشانهی لهلایمن تراستهوه پسمند کراون، نهگمر داوا بکریت له فورماتهکانی تردا بریتی له زمانهکانی تر، نیزی رید (هاسان خویندنهوه)، چاپی گهوره، شریتی دهنگ، هیلی موون و نهلیکترونیکی هیه.

所有经信托基金批准的患者信息均可以其它格式提供，包括其它语言、易读阅读软件、大字体、音频、盲文、穆恩体 (Moon) 盲文和电子格式，敬请索取。

Dhammaan warbixinta bukaanleyda ee Ururka ee la oggol yahay waxaa marka la codsado lagu heli karaa nuskhado kale, sida luqado kale, akhris fudud, far waaweyn, dhegeysi, farta braille ee dadka indhaha la', Moon iyo nidaam eletaroonig ah.