



## **Tissue Donation: Precious Gift -**

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**The gift of tissue donation provides great hope to people who are unable to see, to patients who suffer life threatening burns, to children with cancer who face amputation and others who can benefit from bone and other transplantation therapies..**

The donation of tendons and other muscular skeletal tissue enables athletes to perform to Olympic level. Tissue donation remains a remarkable gift that can transform the lives of those who suffer from a wide range of conditions.

The generosity of the tissue donors is less frequently discussed and there is a view that almost anyone can donate tissue following death. An idea usually linked to the suggestion that any of us can help another following death. This is a powerful idea, but it is important not to diminish the gift, and sense of sacrifice that families who agree to tissue donation after the death of their loved one may experience.

The idea of organ donation is often presented as a rare gift, an extraordinary expression of the human ability to combine altruism and medical science to give life and hope. Organ donation's life-saving capacity is advertised and often represented in film and in the media. The transformation experienced by patients who are fortunate to receive this precious gift is also represented.

It should however, never be forgotten, that the families of tissue donors, like organ

donors, are courageous in their grief when they agree for donation to proceed. The donation processes differ between tissue donation and organ donation, and families who are already at home following the death of a loved one are frequently shocked to receive an unexpected call asking them to agree to donation. There are sometimes sacrifices and consequences for the donor family who donate their loved ones tissue.

Importantly it should be seen that the gift of tissue may be life saving for those with failing eyesight who are fearful of life without sight, and for so many people. There is insufficient tissue to meet the needs of our population. Donating tissue is an extraordinary and precious gift which should be acknowledged with gratitude.

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