

[pluslife.org.au](http://pluslife.org.au)

For further information, please call **1800 801 997**,  
email [info@pluslife.org.au](mailto:info@pluslife.org.au) or visit our website.

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INFORMATION FOR RECIPIENTS:

## Writing to your donor's family

*PlusLife is a not-for-profit organisation*



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Published August 2016



Enhancing lives  
because of you.

Let's talk about donation **1800 801 997**

## Writing to your donor's family

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**Tissue donation is very much like organ donation. Following the unexpected death of a loved one, families of the deceased person are approached by a Donor Coordinator and are asked to consider the donation of tissues (such as bone, heart valves or cornea), for the purpose of transplantation.**

As a part of your recent surgery, you received an 'allograft' - a human transplant donated by a generous donor. This graft was sourced from PlusLife, which is responsible for retrieving donated tissue, then testing and processing the tissue to make special grafts used in surgical procedures for bone tumours, spinal deformities, treatment of joint disease caused by trauma and arthritis; and general orthopaedic conditions and facial/dental reconstructions.

After the surgery, some transplant recipients choose to write to their donor family to thank them for their gift, to share information about themselves and to let them know how the transplant has changed their life.

We encourage transplant recipients to write to their donor family if and when it feels right to them. The decision to write is a deeply personal one. There is no right or wrong time and no right or wrong way to say 'thank you' to your donor family. If you would like to do this, send the card, letter or photograph to us, we will review your communication to ensure confidentiality and if your donor family has indicated a wish to receive correspondence from recipients, we will arrange for it to be forwarded on to them.

Please enclose your name and date of surgery on a separate piece of paper in the envelope, so we can ensure we connect you with the right family. The letter to the family should not include any identifying details, i.e. no name, address, or phone details should be included.

**Donor Family correspondence should be sent to:**

PlusLife  
PO Box 5042  
Midland WA 6056

From our experience, donor families respond very well to receiving communication from patients who have received donated tissue. They see donation as being a positive outcome from what was a tragic circumstance and this is often quite a comfort as they deal with their loss. Your card, letter or photograph can reaffirm to them that their donation provided great wellbeing to others and that their gift of donation was worthwhile.

Some donor families say that writing about their loved one and their decision to donate helps them in their grief, so you may receive a response from your family. Other donor families, although they are comfortable with their decision to donate, prefer privacy and choose not to respond. Either way, communication to your donor family is a unique opportunity to express your appreciation for their decision to donate.

You might like to include information about your surgery, your age, sex, family, and length of illness. Most people describe their lifestyle prior to their transplant and how it has changed since their surgery.

Everyone expresses their thanks in their own way. In nearly all cases, transplant recipients say that this is the most difficult letter they have ever written and that they had to re-write it many times before getting it right.

However, there is no right or wrong time – it will always be appreciated by the donor family.

Even though you may find this the most difficult letter you will ever write, it is a way of acknowledging the generosity of the gift of donation made by your donor family.

A small thank you goes a long way.

“Gentleness, self-sacrifice and generosity are the exclusive possession of no one race or religion.”

MAHATMA GANDHI

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