

Dear recipient,

You might like to acknowledge the gift of life you have been given through organ donation. There is no right or wrong time and no right or wrong way to say ‘thank you’ to your donor family. Recipients may express their thanks by sending a letter, a thank you card or a Mass Card.

This leaflet is designed to help you write your thank you letter/card and explain the process by which it will be sent to your donor family. A Transplant Co-ordinator is available to talk to you while you are in hospital to talk about this or the office can be contacted after discharge home.

From our experience donor families respond very well to receiving letters from recipients. One family said ‘It feels good to know that the recipients of the gift of life appreciate what has been done for them’. Another said ‘his letter was so uplifting – it made me feel the first blessing in this tragedy had just surfaced’. The father of a 29 year old male who died in an accident said ‘‘at first we had mixed emotions but after reading the letter several times, we felt a sense of relief knowing the transplant was a success and also a feeling of gratitude to the recipient for having written the beautiful letter’’.

What information does your donor family receive?

Donor families receive a letter from the Transplant Co-ordinators within a month of their loved ones death. We thank the donor family on your behalf for the new lease of life you have been given. Information given includes age, gender, marital status. Donor families are not given any information regarding where you are from or any identifying details.

The Thank You Letter

The letter should not identify you. No name, address, or phone number should be included. Please do not seal the envelope as the Transplant Co-ordinator, who knows the family, will need to check the letter for confidentiality before passing it on. The letter usually starts with ‘‘Dear Donor Family’’ or ‘‘Dear Friends’’. The following is an outline of the details you might like to include:

sex, age, family, and length of illness. Most people describe their lifestyle prior to transplant and how it has changed so much since.

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.

We recommend that you allow some time to lapse after your discharge before expressing your thanks to the donor family. The majority of recipients send this within 4 to 6 months of their transplant. 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 your only way of acknowledging the wonderful gift you have received and a small thank you goes a long way. This will mean so much to your donor family.

Some recipients like to send a card or Mass Card on the anniversary of their transplant or at Christmas. Very occasionally the donor family will reply to thank you and ask you to write again.

What happens to your letter?

When sending card/letter to transplant co-ordinators, please enclose your name and date of transplant on a separate piece of paper so that the card can be forwarded to appropriate family.

The completed letter should be given to the Co-ordinators who will forward it directly to the donor family.

Further information can be obtained from the

Department of Organ Procurement
Beaumont Hospital
Beaumont Road
Dublin 9.

Telephone: 01-8092759. 01-8092298

Information on writing to your donor family

