Writing to Your Donor Family
Choosing to write to your donor family is a personal decision. Some transplant recipients choose to send a card or letter to donor families to say thank you. Donor families say that letters from recipients are valued and appreciated.

It is up to you whether or not you choose to write to the donor family. Your last name will not be included on any letters that you send. No one will know who you are or where you live. If you would like to write to your donor family, here is some information to guide you:

Tell them about yourself

- Use your first name only or simply say “I am a recipient”.
- Say what type of work you do.
- Tell them about your hobbies or interests.
- Please use care in expressing any religious sentiments.
- Do not include the name of the town or city where you live.
Talk about your transplant experience

• Use simple language.
• Recognize the donor family and thank them for their gift.
• Describe how long you waited for a transplant. Share what the wait was like for you and your family.
• Explain how the transplant has improved your health and changed your life. Talk about the activities that you can do now that you couldn’t while waiting for your transplant.
• Explain what has happened in your life since your transplant.

Signing your card or letter

• Sign ‘recipient’ or use only your first name.
• Do not give your address or phone number.
• Do not give the name or location of the transplant hospital or doctor.
Sample letter:

Thank you.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a very sincere thank you for this generous gift of life.

I realize this is a very hard time for you and your family and I extend my deepest sympathy. I truly appreciate this second chance I have been given to live a longer, healthier life. I look forward to each day. With sincere thanks and appreciation.

Mailing your card or letter

• Place your card or letter in an envelope. Don’t seal the envelope.

• Write your full name and the date of your transplant on a separate sheet of paper.

• Place the unsealed envelope and the sheet of paper in a second envelope.
• Seal the outer envelope and send it to your transplant coordinator or transplant centre at the address on the back of this pamphlet. The transplant and donor coordinators will review the card or letter to ensure confidentiality. Your card or letter will then be mailed to your donor family.

Please be aware that your note will take time to reach your donor family because it must be reviewed by the transplant coordinator before it is forwarded.

Will I hear from my donor family?
You may or may not hear from the donor family. Some families have said that writing about their loved one and their decision to donate helped them with their grieving. Other families, even though they are comfortable with their loved one’s decision to donate, prefer privacy and choose not to write to the recipients.
Remember that the family may still be dealing with the loss of their loved one. While you may be celebrating the anniversary of your transplant, it is also the anniversary of someone’s loss. Please keep this in mind when writing.

If you need further information about writing to your donor family, please contact your transplant coordinator or clinic nurse.

**Send letters to:**
Multi-Organ Transplant Program
Nova Scotia and PEI
QEIHealth Sciences Centre
1276 South Park Street
Halifax, NS B3H 2Y9
Phone: 902-473-6193

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

*Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

Nova Scotia Health Authority www.nshealth.ca

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The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only. The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.