

Writing to Your Donor's Family

Will I hear from my donor's family?

You may or may not hear from your donor's family. Some families feel that writing about their loved one and their decision to donate helped them to grieve. 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.

Direct Contact

For donations and transplants that took place in Nova Scotia after January 18, 2021, you and your donor's family may be able to contact each other directly. Both you and your donor's family must be willing to have contact and must meet certain criteria:

1. It has been 12 months (1 year) since the transplant.
2. You have corresponded with the donor family anonymously at least 2 times.
3. Both you and the donor family must request Direct Contact **on your own.**

This pamphlet is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

All requests are received by:

- › The Family Support Liaison
- › A Multi-Organ Transplant Program (MOTP) Recipient Transplant Coordinator (RTC)
- › The Regional Tissue Bank

For more information about writing to your donor's family, contact your transplant coordinator or clinic nurse.

Send letters to:

Multi-Organ Transplant Program
QE II Health Sciences Centre
1276 South Park Street
Halifax, NS B3H 2Y9
Phone: 902-473-6193

For more information about the **Direct Contact** process, contact:

Family Support Liaison

Legacy of Life Organ Donation Program
Suite 300, 3rd Floor, Park Lane Terraces
5657 Spring Garden Road
Halifax, NS B3J 3R4
Phone: 902-718-9124

Email:

DonorFamilySupport@nshealth.ca

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You may choose to write to your donor's family to say thank you. This is a personal decision. **It is up to you whether you choose to write to your donor's family.**

Tips for writing to your donor's family:

- Thank them for their loved one's gift.
- Tell them about yourself, like your hobbies and interests.
- Briefly describe your health condition.
- Talk about your transplant experience.
- How long did you wait for a transplant?
- What was the wait like for you and your family?
- How has the transplant helped you or changed your life?

Remember:

- Your donor's family will be dealing with the loss of their loved one. While you may be celebrating your transplant, it is because of someone else's loss.
- Consider that they may have different religious or spiritual beliefs than you.

Signing your letter

Do not sign your name. You can use:

- > "Recipient"
- > "Donor recipient"
- > "Transplant recipient"
- > "Kidney recipient" (if this applies)

Do not write:

- > **Your name**
- > **Your address**
- > **Your phone number**
- > **Your birthday**
- > **The name or location of your transplant hospital**
- > **The name of your doctor**
- > **Links to social media profiles**
- > **That you would like to meet someday (see back cover)**

Sample letter:

"I am writing to thank you for your loved one's generous gift of life. I know this must be a very difficult time for you and I extend my deepest sympathy to you and your family.

Please know that I am incredibly grateful for the chance I have been given to live a longer, healthier life. I know that this would not have been possible if not for the kindness of your loved one's donation. With sincere thanks, Donor Recipient"

Mailing your letter

- Put your letter in an envelope. **Do not seal it.**
- On a separate piece of paper, write:
 - > Your full name
 - > Your transplant date
- Put the unsealed envelope and the piece of paper in a second envelope.
- Seal the outer envelope and send it to your transplant coordinator or to the Transplant Centre (see address on back cover).
- The recipient transplant coordinator and family support liaison will review the letter to make sure it does not have any personal information.
- They will then mail it to your donor family. Your letter will take time to reach your donor's family because it must be reviewed by the transplant coordinator first.