

2021

# Writing to Your Donor's Family

You may wish to send a card or letter to your transplant or tissue donor's family to say thank you. This is a personal decision. **It is up to you whether or not you choose to write to your donor's family.**

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

For more information on the **Direct Contact** process, contact the Family Support Liaison (see back cover).

**If you would like to write to your donor's family, here is some information to guide you:**

- **Thank them for their loved one's gift.**
- **Tell them about yourself.**
  - › Use your first name only or simply say "I am a recipient."
  - › Tell them about your work and hobbies or activities.
  - › Describe your health condition simply.
- **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 may still be dealing with the loss of their loved one. While you may be celebrating your transplant, it is the result of someone's loss. Please keep this in mind when writing.
- **Do not** include your full name or any other identifying information (like your birthday or address).
- **Do not** include the name of the town or city where you live.
- Be mindful that they may have different religious or spiritual beliefs than you.


## 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 your transplant hospital or doctor.
- **Do not** say that you would like to meet someday. There is a separate Direct Contact process for this.

## Sample letter:

“I am writing to sincerely 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 second 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 card or letter

- Place your card or letter in an envelope. **Do not** 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.
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- Seal the outer envelope and send it to your transplant coordinator or to the transplant centre (see Multi-Organ Transplant Program address on the back cover).
- The transplant and donor coordinators will review the card or letter to make sure it does not have any personal information. They will then mail it to your donor family.

Please be aware that your card or letter will take time to reach your donor's family because it must be reviewed by the transplant coordinator before it is sent.

## **Will I hear from my donor's family?**

You may or may not hear from the donor's family. Some families have said 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.



## **For more information about the Direct Contact process:**

### **Family Support Liaison**

Legacy of Life Organ and Tissue Donation Program

Room 4091, Abbie J. Lane Building  
5909 Veterans' Memorial Lane

Halifax, NS B3H 2E2

Phone: 902-718-9124

Email:

[DonorFamilySupport@nshealth.ca](mailto:DonorFamilySupport@nshealth.ca)

**If you need more information about writing to your donor's family, please contact your transplant coordinator or clinic nurse. Send cards or letters to:**

Multi-Organ Transplant Program:

QEII Health Sciences Centre

1276 South Park Street

Halifax, NS B3H 2Y9

Phone: 902-473-6193

*Prepared by: Multi-Organ Transplant Program*

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

