

A Legacy of Life



Jocelyne, nurse

A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES



HUMAN TISSUE DONATION



*Consent for human tissue donation:
a possibility, a choice! You can make a difference.*

MESSAGE FROM HÉMA-QUÉBEC

Dear family member,

*Our thoughts are with you in this difficult time.
We know that nothing can replace a loved one.*

*In this time of grief and uncertainty, we invite
you to consider an option that could prove to be
very meaningful: tissue donation. With this
generous act, the deceased can leave a lasting
legacy, in addition to improving or even
saving lives.*

*Your loved one may already have expressed a desire
to do so. Perhaps he or she signed the "Organ and*

*tissue donation consent" form when renewing his
or her health insurance card, or signed up for the
"Registre des consentements au don d'organes et
de tissus" of the Chambre des notaires du Québec.
Whatever the case, we encourage you to consider the
possibility of tissue donation and to discuss it with
your relatives.*

*The hospital staff and Héma-Québec's coordinators
are available at all times if you need assistance with
the donation process or answers to your questions.*

*We are here to support you, with the greatest
of respect.*

The Héma-Québec team



*"When we were asked to agree to
tissue donation, we were initially
hesitant. Afterward, we came to
understand how important it was.
We had contributed to saving and
improving the lives of others."*

Normande and Rock,
parents of François,
who died in a car accident




A profoundly human gesture

By consenting to tissue donation, you are performing a generous and selfless act. This unique gift brings hope and health to the sick and injured.

For example:

- ▶ A cornea transplant can restore sight to a person with impaired vision.
- ▶ A skin graft can save the life of a burn victim.
- ▶ A heart valve donation can help a diseased heart function normally again.
- ▶ A donation of bones and tendons can be used in reconstructive surgery.

A UNIQUE GIFT THAT RESTORES HOPE AND HEALTH



"My daughter received a cornea transplant at the age of 16 months. As soon as she is old enough to understand, we will explain to her how the generosity of strangers changed her life."

Josée, mother of Laëla,
cornea recipient

The process

THE DECISION IS YOURS

If you agree to donate human tissue, notify the hospital staff. They will inform us of your consent and we will contact you promptly.

Héma-Québec is responsible for collecting the various tissues for future transplantation. You may rest assured that we will take all the time needed to answer your questions. Moreover, one of our coordinators can assist you throughout the donation process.

Our team will collect the donated tissue within 24 hours of death. The tissues will be removed with care and with the utmost respect for the donor. The body will then be sent to the funeral home, as per your instructions, for funeral arrangements.

"Tissue donation is one of the most selfless gestures a person can make. It demonstrates exceptional generosity of spirit and allows life to go on."

Huguette, a nurse who meets with donor families





"When a fire swept through our home, we were severely burned. Our lives were saved because of skin grafts. We are so grateful we can once again enjoy life fully with our children."

Valérie and Martin,
skin graft recipients



Some answers to frequently asked questions

UNLIKE ORGANS, HUMAN TISSUES CAN BE REMOVED FOR SEVERAL HOURS AFTER THE BLOOD STOPS CIRCULATING. THE PROCESS IS HANDLED QUICKLY AND WITH RESPECT FOR THE FAMILY'S GRIEVING PROCESS.

- ▶ Can a person become a tissue donor regardless of the circumstances surrounding his or her death?
Every donor is thoroughly evaluated. Depending on the outcome of the evaluation, the donation may proceed.
- ▶ When does the tissue donation process begin?
As soon as the family has given consent, the process of determining donor eligibility can begin. Tissues must be removed as soon as possible after death, in order to ensure their quality.
- ▶ What is the age limit for tissue donation?
The age criterion varies with the tissue type and will be evaluated by the Héma-Québec coordinator.
- ▶ Are diagnostic tests conducted when tissue is donated?
A blood sample is taken to determine the donor's serologic profile (for example: blood type, Rh factor, HIV, hepatitis).



Some answers to frequently asked questions

▶ How are tissues removed?

First, the donor's body is handled with care and respect by a team of professionals who specialize in tissue recovery. The process is carried out in a facility specially designed for this purpose, at Héma-Québec or in a hospital operating room, according to stringent procedures.

▶ How long before the family can recover the body?

After obtaining consent for tissue donation, Héma-Québec generally has up to 24 hours to remove the tissue and return the body to the family.

▶ Can the donor be viewed?

The tissue removal procedure does not preclude a viewing at the funeral home.

▶ What happens to the tissues after they are removed?

The tissues are processed and conserved until they can be grafted. Bacteriological tests are performed on the tissues, in order to ensure an optimal-quality graft for the future recipient.

▶ What about confidentiality?

It is important to point out that the results of the analyses, like any information gathered for donation purposes, are confidential. All information relative to evaluating the tissues and the serologic testing remains strictly confidential and is used solely to determine the eligibility of the potential donor.



**THANK YOU
FOR TAKING
THE TIME TO
THINK ABOUT IT**



"Having a transplant is a transformative experience. It extends your life, and it is an act of pure, unconditional love. Words cannot express the gratitude I feel."

Pierrette,
cornea recipient

WOULD YOU LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?

DO YOU NEED SUPPORT IN THE PROCESS?

Human tissue donation

Please feel free to discuss it with the hospital staff on duty.

For more information...

- ▶ visit the Héma-Québec's Web site at www.hema-quebec.qc.ca
- or
- ▶ call toll-free: 1-888-366-7338 (select option 2)



Blood Products
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