

# EYE DONATION AND YOU

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Do you know....

- There are approximately 1.2 crore blind people in india.
- Of these, 25 lakh are blind due to corneal diseases.
- Around twenty lakh corneally blind are in need of corneal transplants.
- As against an annual requirement of 75,000 to 1, 00,000 corneas, at present only 13,000 to 14,000 eyes are donated in India.

## **What is corneal blindness**

The cornea, the main focussing part of the eye, is the clear surface in front of the eye. Like a “Window”, it allows light to enter the eye. Vision can be markedly reduced or lost if the cornea becomes “cloudy” or scarred. This condition is known as corneal blindness.

What are the causes of corneal blindness/

Injuries to the eye, malnutrition, infections, chemical burns, congenital disorders and postoperative disorders can cause corneal blindness.

## **The role of the ophthalmologist in treating corneal blindness.**

Corneal surgeons are ophthralmologists who specialize in treating diseases of the cornea. A corneal transplant for corneal blindness has a success rate of over 80 percent. Depending on the availability, cornea is supplied by an authorized eye bank free of charge. However, the recipient will have to meet the costs of the virology test. The visual outcome depends on the patient’s condition, the quality of corneal tissue and postoperative medical care.

## **What is an Eye Bank?**

An Eye Bank is a non-profit community organization managed by a medical director, an eye bank manager and eye bank technicians.

## **Functions of the Eye Bank**

- Availabilitiy of trained staff round the clock to attend to calls.
- Evaluate and provide quality corneas to corneal surgeons

- Enable corneal research using eyes unsuitable for grafts to find newer techniques improve presentation methods and train corneal surgeons.
- Increase public awareness about eye donation and eye banking
- Train doctors in correct methods of removal of eyes
- Develop and establish a network of eye donation centers.

### **Who can donate eyes?**

- Eye donors can belong to any age group or sex
- People who use spectacles, diabetics, hypertensive and those without communicable diseases can also donate eyes.
- Patients who have undergone cataract surgery.

### **Facts about Eye Donation**

- Eyes can be donated only after death
- Eyes must be removed within 6 hours after death
- Eyes are removed by a trained doctor
- The eye bank team does the removal of eyes at the donor's residence
- Eye removal does not delay the funeral ceremony
- Eye removal does not cause disfigurement
- The entire procedure of removing eyes takes around 20-30 minutes
- Religions are not against eye donation
- The identity of the recipient and donor is kept confidential
- Most eye banks are affiliated to the Eye Bank Association of India
- In the event of a death in your family you can help by contacting the nearest eye bank as quickly as possible

### **Eyes will be removed only with the consent of the donor's family**

#### **Important Points:]**

- Contact the nearest eye bank as quickly as possible  
Give the correct address with specific landmarks and telephone number to enable the eye bank team locates the place easily.
- If the death certificate from the physician is available, keep it ready
- Eye donation can be done only with the consent of the next of kin in the presence of two witnesses.
- Closes the eye lids
- Switch off the fan
- Keep the air conditioner on if it is there

- Raise the head slightly by placing a pillow

A small quantity of blood will be drawn for matching purposes and to rule out viral diseases. Corneas of persons identified with AIDS, Hepatitis B and C, Rabies, Septicemia, Acute Leukemia, Tetanus, Cholera, Deaths due to unknown reasons and infectious diseases like Meningitis and Encephalitis cannot be used for transplants.

### **What happens after donation?**

The eyes taken to the eye bank and evaluated by trained eye bank staff.

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Tests are carried out and the report is sent to the corneal surgeon

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Based on this information the corneal surgeon decides on the type of recipient he/she needs

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Refers to the waiting list

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Calls recipient

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Performs the corneal transplant

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Follows the recipient over time to ensure that the graft is successful

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The donor's family receives a certificate of appreciation from the eye bank