

Appendix 'G'

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED REGARDING EYE DONATION

Q.1. Who can be an eye donor?

ANS. Anyone can be a donor irrespective of age, sex or blood group.

Q.2. Do religious authorities approve of donating one's eyes?

ANS. Yes, all the religious faiths support this noble act of humanity helping vital sight restoration programme to provide vision to the blind people.

Q.3. Is the whole eye used for transplant?

ANS. No, only the thin transparent layer in front of the iris called the cornea is used for transplant. Cornea can be compared to an outer lens of a camera.

Q.4. Do cataracts or the use of spectacles render the corneas unfit?

ANS. No, both these conditions relate to the lens of the eye and not the cornea.

Q.5. Does eye donation disfigure the donor's face?

ANS. No, the removal of eyes does not produce disfigurement nor does it interfere with the customary funeral arrangements.

Q.6. Does the human body reject the transplanted donor's cornea?

ANS. Corneas do not have any direct blood supply so the risk of rejection is very low. Rejections, if they occur, can be suppressed by timely medication.

Q.7. How will my donations be used?

ANS. After the eyes are removed, they will be evaluated, processed, screened, and then supplied to the eye surgeon for transplant.

Q.8. What conditions render corneas unfit for donations?

ANS. Corneas of persons suffering from AIDS, jaundice, rabies, syphilis, tetanus and septicaemia are considered unfit for donation. At the time of enucleation, blood sample from the body of the deceased is also taken and necessary tests for HIV, syphilis & hepatitis are carried out at the Eye Bank.

Q.9. What about diabetes or hypertension?

ANS. Even donors with these conditions can donate their eyes.

Q.10. Is there any use for corneas which are for some reason not used for transplant?

ANS. Corneas which are not found viable for transplant are used for research and teaching purposes.

Q.11. Do corneal transplants guarantee sight to all blind people?

ANS. No. Transplants only help when the loss of sight is solely due to corneal defect and the rest of the eye's mechanism is intact.

Q.12. How quickly should the eyes be removed after death?

ANS. As soon as possible, but not more than 4 to 6 hours after death. In a country like ours, where the climate is hot & humid, the endothelium cells in cornea deteriorate faster and hence shorter time interval is preferable.

Q.13. Is it necessary to transport the donor to the hospital after death?

ANS. No. Eye Banks have personnel who will come to the donor's home and remove the eyes. The procedure takes approximately 30 – 45 minutes.

Q.14. What is the difference between an Eye Bank and an Eye Donation Centre?

ANS. An Eye Donation Centre provides the services of attending to the call received from a donor's family for removal of eye balls and send them to an Eye Bank where there are full-fledged facilities for processing, evaluating and storing the corneas in a suitable medium to keep it viable upto 4 days and provide suitable quality corneas to the needy patients / hospitals for transplant. Necessary blood tests are also carried out at the Eye Bank. In a city like Mumbai, there are several eye donation centres (although they are called Eye Banks), most of which are linked to a Central Eye Bank viz. Eye Bank Coordination & Research Centre (EBCRC) situated at Haji Bachooali Eye Hospital at Parel. Both the Eye Donation Centres and Eye Banks have to be registered with the State Government as per the rules framed by the Health Dept. of the Government.

HOW TO DONATE EYES

For donors :

- (1) Fill up the donor card alongwith signature of 2 witnesses. One of them should be your nearest relative and the other one may be preferably your family physician.
- (2) Discuss your intention of eye donation with your family doctor and relatives.
- (3) Keep one part of your Card with the next of your kin.

For the donor's relatives :

You have the authority and moral responsibility to donate the eyes of the deceased -

- (1) Get the vital death certificate quickly.
- (2) Contact the nearest eye bank as soon as possible. The eye bank need not necessarily be the one where the donor had pledged his eyes.
- (3) Close the eye lids.
- (4) Cover the closed lids with moist cotton wool.
- (5) Switch off the fan (Switch on air conditioner if possible)
- (6) Raise the donor's head by 6 inches by placing two pillows below it.