

Can I expect to receive a response from the recipient?

Many organ recipients feel overwhelmed with emotion and have difficulty expressing their gratitude in writing. Some may take months or even years before they feel comfortable enough to write to their donor's family. Others remain paralyzed with guilt or fear of hurting the donor's family, and as a result they do not write at all.

The fact that you are taking the first step may encourage the recipients to correspond, as they will know that you are ready to communicate.

Assistance

If you are having difficulty writing your letter or if you have any questions, please contact a coordinator-clinical advisor at Transplant Québec. The latter will be glad to assist you.



INFORMATION

Transplant Québec

Head office :
200-4100, rue Molson
Montréal (Québec) H1Y 3N1
Office : 514-286-1414
Fax : 514-286-0615

Québec office :
100-1305, rue du Blizzard
Québec (Québec) G2K 0A1
Office : 418-845-8145
Fax : 418-845-8561

Email : info@transplantquebec.ca
Organ donation hotline : 1 877 463-6366

www.transplantquebec.ca

Writing to transplant recipients



Making the decision to write to transplant recipients

As a member of an organ donor's family, you have suffered the loss of a loved one, but you have also bestowed a wonderful gift on one or more persons you do not know. You have given the gift of life.

The decision to contact the transplant recipients is a matter of personal choice. Sharing information about your loved one may indeed help you through your grieving process. The decision is yours alone, and you are under no obligation to correspond if you do not wish to.

In the event that you do wish to communicate with the recipient or recipients, you may send the letter at any time: there are no constraints in this regard. You may also send a simple card mentioning that you are thinking of them.

Should you decide to write, however, here are some useful suggestions.



Provide general information

- All your correspondence should remain anonymous. There should be no mention of your name, given name, exact age, address, telephone number, email, or the hospital where your loved one was treated.
- Talk about your loved one's personality, qualities, interests and favourite hobbies.
- You may also mention your loved one's sex, age group or family status (e.g. child, young adult, middle age, mother, grandfather)

Note : When composing your letter, think twice about making comments of a religious nature since you do not know where the recipient stands on the matter.

The following samples may help you compose your letter :

"We hope that you now enjoy improved health. If you agree, we would love to find out how you are doing."

"Our family is pleased to have opted for organ donation and to have been able to help people in need."

"We felt it was important to respect our loved one's wishes to donate his/her organs."

"Being able to write you and tell you what a wonderful person our [son, daughter, mother] was helps us to overcome our loss."

How to conclude the letter

Sign off by indicating only "family of your donor" or any other generic signature.

Where should I send my letter ?

- Place your letter in an unsealed envelope without postage.
- On a separate sheet of paper, write down:
 - your name, address and telephone number if you wish to receive confirmation that Transplant Québec has forwarded the letter to the recipient(s);
 - the name of your loved one and your relationship to him or her;
 - the date on which the donation was made.
- Place the two documents in a sealed envelope and forward it by standard mail to Transplant Québec, to the attention of clinical services.

Upon receipt, your correspondence will first be read in order to ensure that it complies with regulations pertaining to confidentiality, and then it will be forwarded to the recipient(s) through their respective transplantation programs.

Please note that this process may take several weeks.