

EYE DONATION

What is an EYE Bank?

An eye bank is an organisation which obtain, evaluates and distributes eyes from humanitarian-minded citizens for use in corneal transplantation, research and education. To ensure patient safety, the donated eyes are evaluated under strict medical standards. All donated eyes not suitable for corneal transplantation are used for valuable research and education.

Why should eyes be donated?

Donated human eyes are necessary in preservation and restoration of sight through corneal transplantation, research and education. More than 90% corneal transplant operation successfully restores vision in people suffering from blindness due to corneal problems. Infants born with cloudy corneas have an opportunity to see following corneal transplantation.

What is the cornea?

The cornea is the clear, transparent dome in front of the "black portion" of the eye. It is also the main focussing surface, which converges light rays as they enter the eye to focus on the retina. It is thus the most important part of the optical apparatus of the Eye. Loss of transparency directly results in loss of vision.

What is corneal Transplantation?

A Corneal transplant is an operation which replaces the opaque cornea with a clear cornea obtained from a human donor eye.

How does a Cornea become opaque?

Infection

Injuries

Iatrogenic

Malnutrition

Congenital / Hereditary.

Magnitude of the problem in India

1/4th of the world's blind in India

27 million - moderate sight impairment

9 million - bilateral blind

260,000 - Blind children

No of Corneal Blinds in India 4.6 Million out of 4.6 Million 90% are below the age of 45 years including 60% are below the age of 12 years.

Out of 4.6 Million, at least 3 Million can benefit by corneal transplantation.

Who can be an eye donor?

Anyone practically from the age of 1 year, there is no maximum age limit. Poor eyesight and age make no difference. One can bequeath his eyes by taking a pledge while he is alive. He resolves to donate his eyes after his death. This by itself is a noble act but it requires relatives or friends to carry out his pledge, his desire, after his death..

Spectacle Wearers, persons who had cataract surgery, diabetics and hypertensive can donate eyes. The ultimate decision about usage for transplantation will be made after evaluation.

Can the next-of-kin consent to a donation if the deceased family member hasn't signed a pledge form?

Yes.

How to donate?

You are authorised to donate the eyes of your beloved relatives at the time of their death. The eyes need to be collected within 6 hours of death. So, call the eye bank as early as possible after the death.

Things to do after making the call:

1. Keep both eyes of deceased closed and covered with moist cotton.
2. Switch off the overhead fan.
3. If possible, instill antibiotic eye drops periodically in the deceased's eyes-to reduce the chance of infection.
4. Raise the head end of the body by about 6 inches, if possible - to lessen the incidence of bleeding during the removal of the eyes.

Who cannot be a donor?

- Death of unknown cause.
- Death due to infectious caused viz. Rabies, syphilis, infectious hepatitis, septicaemia, and AIDS.

Is there any delay in funeral arrangements?

No, Eyes removal is performed shortly (within half an hour) after death and leaves no visible signs the would interface with common funeral practices.

Is there religious conflict?

No, Donations gives a gift of life or sight to others. As such, it is consistent with beliefs and attitudes of all major religious and ethical traditions.

Can the wholeeye be transplanted?

No. Only the cornea can be transplanted. However, the rest in part of the donor eye is used for research and education.

Can a person blind from retinal or optic nerve disease donate his eyes?

Yes. Provided the cornea is clear.

Can a living person donate his/her eyes?

No.

Can the recipients be told who donated the eyes?

No. The gift of sight is made anonymously.

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