

How will the eyes be used?

Donated eyes are treated with the utmost respect. The corneas are assessed, prepared and stored at the eye bank. Corneas can only be stored for a maximum of five days. Patients are given a scheduled date by their surgeon in the hope of a cornea becoming available. Those in urgent need are provided a transplant as soon as possible.

Unfortunately not all corneas are suitable for transplantation. However, with family consent, the eyes can be used for other types of sight-saving surgery and medical research.

How can I become a donor?

There are two main ways to indicate your wish to become an organ and tissue donor:

1. Roads and Traffic Authority: Indicate your wish to be a donor when you apply for, or renew, your drivers licence.

2. Australian Organ Donor Register: In addition, or if you do not have a drivers licence, you can register with the Australian Organ Donor Register by phone (1800 777 203), on the internet (www.medicareaustralia.gov.au) or in person at any Medicare office.

Most importantly, discuss your decision to be a donor with your family. They will be part of the donation process and should be aware of your wishes.

Finally, to become an eye donor your doctor, nurse or family member should call the Lions NSW Eye Bank. This involves a simple call to the transplant coordinator on call (available 24 hours) on 9382 7288 or 9382 7111.

The Lions NSW Eye Bank is associated with the following organisations:



LIONS NSW/ACT
SAVE SIGHT FOUNDATION



SYDNEY HOSPITAL & SYDNEY EYE HOSPITAL
A PROUD PART OF:



SOUTH EASTERN SYDNEY
ILLAWARRA
NSW HEALTH

AND OTHER PARTICIPATING AREA HEALTH SERVICES

Our contact details:



Mailing Address:
GPO Box 4337
SYDNEY 2001



Phone Number:
02 9382 7288



Fax Number:
02 9382 7274



Email:
eyebank@eye.usyd.edu.au



Website:
www.eye.usyd.edu.au/eyebank



You can save someone's sight.



LIONS NSW EYE BANK

Answering your questions about eye donation

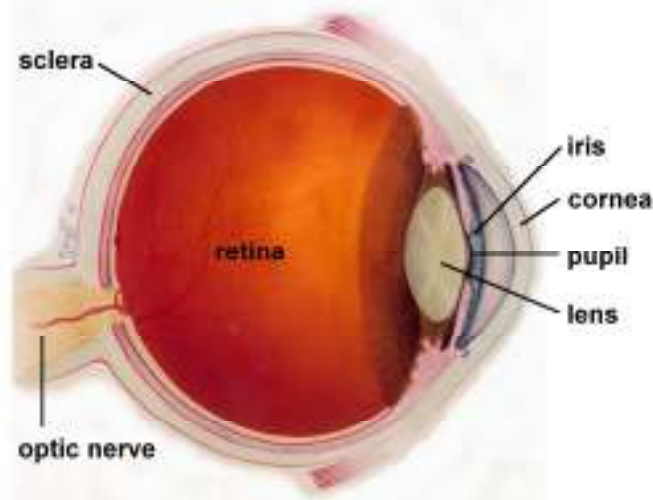
02 9382 7288

The Gift of Sight

Imagine for a moment what life is like for the thousands of people in NSW/ACT who are blind or severely visually impaired. The sight of many of these people can be restored by an operation known as corneal transplantation. This can only occur when a suitable cornea is available. Unfortunately, the only source of corneas is from eyes donated by recently deceased people. It is the generosity of these donors and their families that makes this sight-saving operation possible.

What is the cornea?

The cornea is the clear window at the front of the eye that protects the eye and focuses light. Vision can be severely reduced if the cornea is cloudy or distorted in shape.



▲ Cross section view of a human eye.

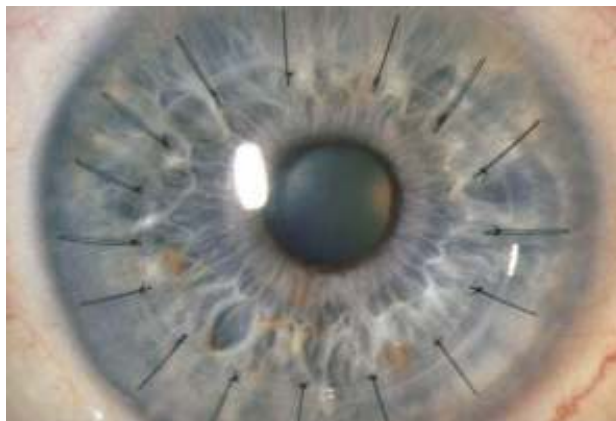
What is a corneal transplant?

If the cornea is damaged the only way to restore sight is to replace it with another human cornea. During a corneal transplant, all or part of the

damaged cornea is removed and replaced with a healthy donor cornea. This operation can restore vision for more than 90 percent of people with corneal blindness or vision impairment.

“...the most common and most successful human transplant...”

Corneal transplantation was the first human transplant ever performed. It is also the most common and most successful human transplant performed.



▲ Appearance of the eye after a common type of corneal transplant surgery. The stitches are eventually removed.

Who needs corneal transplants?

Corneal blindness occurs when the cornea becomes clouded or irregular in shape due to injury, disease or infection.

“People of all ages... are currently awaiting corneal transplants.”

People of all ages, from young children to the elderly, are currently awaiting corneal transplants. These people depend on donors to restore their sight.

What is an eye bank?

Eye banks obtain, evaluate and distribute eyes that are donated by caring individuals for corneal transplantation and valuable medical research.

The Lions NSW Eye Bank is the centre for collection, storage, preparation and distribution of corneas in NSW and the ACT. We are supported by Lions International and NSW Health.

“...the availability of corneas is limited and the demand is high.”

We provide over 500 corneal transplants every year. We also assist with valuable medical research into eye disease. However, the availability of corneas is limited and the demand is high. There can be a long wait for a corneal transplant for some patients.

Who can become an eye donor?

Almost anyone. As long as the cornea is healthy, it can be used to restore sight. Cataracts, poor eyesight, age and most forms of cancer do not prevent you from becoming an eye donor. There are, however, certain medical conditions that can prevent donation in some cases.

What does eye donation involve?

Eye donation involves the removal of the whole eye. The procedure is performed by skilled paramedical personnel within twelve hours after death. The eyes are replaced with prostheses and the procedure does not alter the appearance of the donor.

Funeral arrangements, including a viewing if desired, can still occur after donation. There is no cost involved for the donor family.