



The Decision to Write

Choosing to write to your donor family is a deeply personal decision. Many recipients may wonder whether they should write or when is the best time to write. You may choose to write any time after your transplant, as there are no waiting periods.

Some people want to communicate right away, some need time before they are ready, and some may not choose to write at all.

It may help you to know that many donor families have shared how meaningful it is to hear from their loved one's recipients.

It may be that you do not want to write at this time. You may be more comfortable sending a holiday or "Thinking of You" card at a later date. Know that there is no time limit for sending a card or letter.



About Network for Hope

Network for Hope is the local organ procurement organization (OPO) that works with families whose loved ones have generously given the gift of life through organ and tissue donation.

OPOs and Transplant Centers work together to facilitate communication between transplant recipients and donor families. This information is provided to assist recipients in writing a letter to their donor family.



Writing

**TO YOUR
DONOR
FAMILY**

Tips for Writing Your Donor Family

Correspondence may be initiated by the recipient or the donor family. If you would like to write to the donor family, you may send a simple greeting card or letter.

A Simple “Thank You” Means So Much

- It shows appreciation for the gift.
- It says their gift was worthwhile.
- It shows a life has been saved, and many people are grateful.
- It says you remember their generosity.
- It shows their loved one made a difference in this world.

Information You May Want to Include

- Your first name and names of your family members.
- Your occupation, hobbies, interests.
- Use simple language if sharing why you needed a transplant.
- Describe how long you waited and the impact this had on your family.
- Acknowledge the donor family’s loss and tell how grateful you are to have received this life-saving gift.
- Share important milestones or day-to-day activities you have been able to resume since receiving your transplant.

Things to Avoid

- Please do not include last names, cities, contact information, specific employers, names of hospitals or doctors.
- If making any religious comments, please keep in mind that the faith of the donor family is unknown.

Closing Your Card or Letter

- Sign your first name only
- Do not reveal your address, city, or phone number

Additional Considerations

It is acceptable for a member of your family to send a letter instead of or in addition to your letter. Your spouse, parents, or children, for example, may want to share what this gift has meant to them.

Sending Your Card or Letter

1. Place it in an unsealed envelope
2. On a separate piece of paper, include:
 - A. Your full name
 - B. Date of Transplant
 - C. Hospital where you received the transplant
3. Mail your letter/card with the separate paper to your transplant coordinator at the transplant center.

The transplant center staff will mail the letter to the procurement organization, who will forward the letter to the donor family.

Allow for Extra Mailing Time

Since the correspondence is first sent to your transplant center and then forwarded, please allow extra time for it to reach your donor family.

Will I Hear From My Donor Family?

There is no guarantee that you will receive a response from your donor family. Some donor families have said that writing about their loved one and their decision to donate helps them in the grieving process. Some families may be overwhelmed with emotion or may have difficulty expressing their sentiments in words. Still others may take several months or even years before they feel comfortable writing to their loved one’s recipients. Other donor families, even though they are comfortable with their decision to donate, prefer privacy and choose not to write to the recipients.

If you have questions or need further information about writing, please reach out to Network for Hope and ask for a Family Aftercare Coordinator:

📞 **Louisville Office: (502) 581-9511**
Cincinnati Office: (513) 558-5555

✉️ **Aftercare@NetworkForHope.org**