



Communicating with Recipients

The decision to communicate with recipients and their families is a very personal one. For many donor families, a brief note is a simple act that can provide a strong sense of well-being.

If you decide to write to your recipient, we can help you through the process. Below you will find answers to common questions about how to reach out, what can be included, and who you will be able to communicate with.

What should I include in my correspondence?

We ask that you follow these guidelines when writing about yourself or your loved ones.

- Use first names only in the letter and closing signature.
- You may tell your story and/or the story of your loved one and explain how the experience has changed your life.
- You may include a photo of yourself and loved one, as well as details such as your loved one's state of residence, age, job, hobbies, and family (marital status, children or grandchildren), but identities must be kept confidential.
- Please do not provide any specific identifying information such as address, city, phone number, email address, or last name.
- On a separate sheet of paper, write your name, mailing address, loved one's name, and date of donation. This sheet will be for Mid-America Transplant use only and will not be forwarded with the correspondence.

How should I send my correspondence?

If you are sending a physical letter, place the correspondence in an unsealed, unstamped envelope and enclose it in a mailing envelope addressed to Mid-America Transplant. A member of our team will review your letter to ensure confidentiality before forwarding.

Letters should be mailed to:

Mid-America Transplant
Donor Family Support
1100 Highlands Plaza Drive East, Suite 100
St. Louis, MO 63110

Correspondence may also be sent by email to: donorfamily@midamericatransplant.org. Please attach your letter as a Microsoft Word document.

How will I know if Mid-America Transplant has received my correspondence?

Our team will use the home mailing or email address you provide to send confirmation that your correspondence has been received and forwarded.

How long does it take for Mid-America to forward a letter to the recipient?

On average, Mid-America Transplant forwards correspondence within three days of receipt. Please allow extra time for the holidays.

Will I receive a response to my correspondence?

You may or may not receive a response from the recipient of your loved one's gifts. Many recipients have said that writing to their donor family is the most difficult thing they have ever done. Feelings of guilt or inadequacy, along with the fear of causing a donor family more pain can prevent the recipient from being able to express their gratitude.

Can I release my contact information?

Mid-America Transplant guidelines require that a donor family and recipient family exchange supervised correspondence one time before they request to release contact information. After this initial exchange, either party can request consent for the release of information. Contact information will be released only when both parties have received and signed the release forms.

Who will I be able to communicate with?

It is important to know that the amount of information available about the recipient is dependent upon the type of donation.

Communicating with Organ Recipients

Five to six weeks after donation, donor families receive a letter containing general information about each recipient including age, gender, and in some cases, information about their families and interests.

If you choose to contact the organ recipient with information about your loved one, you may send written correspondence to Mid-America Transplant. We will forward your correspondence to the appropriate transplant center. The transplant center will forward your letter to the recipient. Mid-America Transplant has no direct contact with the organ recipients. Due to the forwarding process, please allow several weeks for your correspondence to be received by the recipient.

If organ recipients choose to contact the donor family, they send their correspondence to the transplant center, who then forwards it to Mid-America Transplant. We will forward any communication received by the recipient family to you, the donor family.

Communicating with Tissue Recipients

Donor families are not able to initiate communication with tissue recipients because there is not a direct recipient at the time of the donation. Mid-America Transplant does not receive direct notification when tissue is transplanted and therefore cannot automatically forward this information to donor families.

The gift of tissue can be preserved for up to five years. This means your loved one's donation may help many individuals over a period of time.

Although you cannot initiate communication with tissue recipients, you can request an update on your loved one's gift beginning one year after donation.

To request an update, please contact Donor Family Care at 800-925-3666 or donorfamily@midamericatransplant.org.

Communicating with Cornea Recipients

Corneas can be transplanted within the United States or internationally.

If corneas are transplanted within the United States, limited information on recipients may be available.

If Mid-America Transplant recovered your loved one's cornea, you can initiate communication through Mid-America Transplant.

If our partner organization, Saving Sight, recovered your loved one's corneas, recipient information can be requested by contacting them at 800-331-2636.

If you choose to contact the cornea recipient(s), you may send written correspondence to Mid-America Transplant. We will forward your correspondence to the appropriate cornea transplant center and the transplant center will forward your letter or card to the recipient. Mid-America Transplant has no direct contact with the cornea recipient(s). Due to the forwarding process, please allow several weeks for your correspondence to be received by the recipient(s).

Requesting Information on Recipients

Mid-America Transplant does not receive direct notification when tissue is transplanted and therefore cannot automatically forward this information to donor families. Information on recipients is limited because of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).