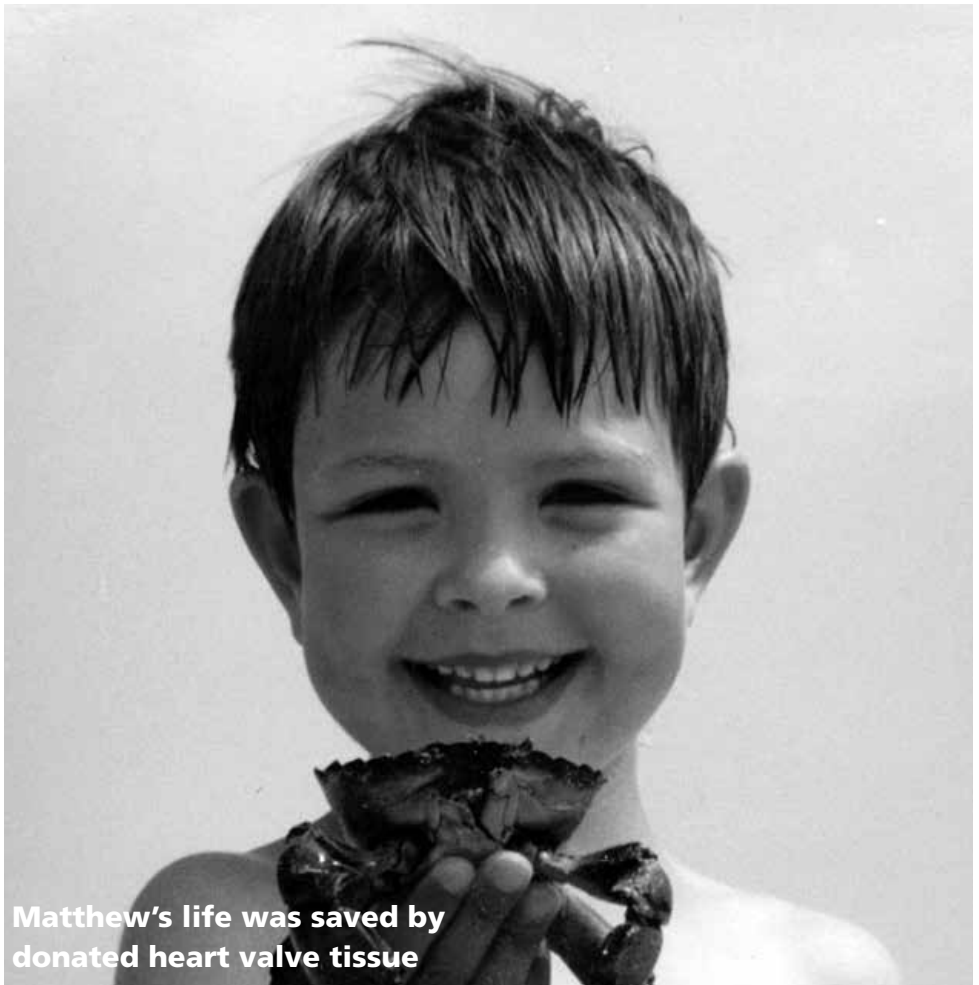


# Donation of tissue for transplantation



**Matthew's life was saved by  
donated heart valve tissue**

Thank you for taking the time to consider the donation of tissue for transplantation. Your interest in tissue donation may help to save or greatly improve the lives of up to ten patients.

This leaflet will help you decide if donating tissue for transplantation is something your relative would have wanted to do.

## Why is tissue donation important?

Every year thousands of patients need tissue transplant surgery, but there is a national shortage of donated eye and heart valve tissue in the UK. Many more people would benefit from sight-saving or life-saving heart surgery if more tissues were donated.

## What are the benefits of heart valve donation?

Heart valves can be transplanted to help up to four patients. The 'aortic' or 'pulmonary' heart valves and/or patches can be transplanted from one donor. These transplants will save the lives of babies and children born with heart defects and adults suffering with diseased or infected heart valves.

## What are the benefits of eye donation?

Eye tissue can be transplanted to help up to ten patients. The clear outer layer (cornea) of a donated eye may be transplanted into patients who are blind because they have a damaged cornea, or to relieve pain, treat eye infection or injury in other patients. The white part of a donated eye (sclera) can be donated to restore sight for patients who are going blind due to glaucoma.

## What is the Oxford Heart Valve Bank (OHVB)?

The Oxford Heart Valve Bank (OHVB) organises the tissue donation and then prepares, tests and stores it until it is transported to centres across the whole of the UK where it is transplanted. The OHVB is located in the John Radcliffe Hospital, part of Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

## What is the Moorfields Lions Eye Bank?

The donation of eye tissue is organised by OHVB and then it is prepared, tested and stored at the Moorfields Lions Eye Bank until it is used for cornea transplantation and glaucoma surgery.

## What can I do to help?

Our hospital Tissue Co-ordinators will check if your relative joined the organ donor register while they were alive. If they are not on the register, you can still give consent for them, if you believe it is what they would have wanted.

## How do I give consent for donation?

Our Tissue Co-ordinator may contact you to give you information about tissue donation; if so, you will be able to ask questions. If you wish to give consent, they will call you by telephone or, if there is enough time, they may arrange to meet you at the hospital. The Tissue Co-ordinator will ask you some medical and lifestyle history questions. If you want to go ahead with donation, they will complete a consent form with you. If anything is not clear to you, or you would like more information, please ask.

If the donor is under 18 months old and/or has been breast-fed in the last 12 months, then the Co-ordinator will ask about the history of their mother as well.

## What happens if I change my mind?

You can withdraw your consent at any time whilst the tissue is in storage. If you wish to do this, please call us using the contact details at the end of this leaflet.

## Who can be a donor?

Many people up to 70 years of age may be able to donate tissue for transplantation. The Tissue Co-ordinator will only contact you if this is possible.

## How quickly does donation have to take place?

In order for tissue to be suitable for transplantation it needs to be donated within strict time limits – eye donation has to be within 30 hours of death, heart valve donation is acceptable up to 48 hours after death. In order to meet national requirements a blood sample also must be collected within 24 hours.

## Where does the donation take place?

A specially trained team will perform the retrieval procedure in a specialist mortuary (usually the John Radcliffe Hospital mortuary). If your relative is going to have a post mortem examination, then the donation may happen at the same time.

## What procedure is used for the donation?

For the heart valve donation, a surgical incision is carefully made down the middle of the chest (about 20cm long for adults). A smaller 'y' shaped incision may sometimes be used instead. The top half of the heart is then gently removed. It may be possible instead to remove the valves only. The incision is sewn up very carefully and covered with a dressing.

For eye donation, each eye is removed with a very small part of the optic nerve. The eye is reconstructed carefully with an eye shield, and the eyelid is closed.

## Will the donation affect the appearance?

There is only a very small risk afterwards (less than 5%) that the appearance will be affected (please ask us if you wish to know more details). You may arrange to view your relative after donation.

## Will it affect the funeral arrangements?

No. The funeral arrangements should not be delayed.

## If the tissue can't be used for transplantation, can it be donated for research?

Yes. It may be possible to donate tissue for research. Doctors and other hospital staff study human tissue in order to complete their training and to learn to understand disease better. Research studies may lead to the development of new medicines and

treatments and improve ways of detecting diseases earlier. The NHS also needs to monitor its own tests and processes (audit). It may be possible to donate tissue for any of these valuable 'scheduled' purposes as well as, or instead of transplantation.

## What happens if the tissue is not used?

Tissue which cannot be transplanted or used for other purposes will be disposed of according to hospital policy and national requirements.

## Which tests are performed?

Blood and tissue samples have to be collected for testing for HIV, hepatitis, HTLV and syphilis according to UK requirements. The samples may be stored for additional testing if necessary. In the event of any screening results that may have implications for the family, relevant persons will be contacted if their health could be affected. If your relative is under 18 months old, a sample of blood from their mother will also be required.

## Will information about my relative be needed?

Yes. The medical records will be reviewed to obtain information about your relative's medical and behavioural history because it may be very important for transplant safety. The information may also add meaning to research studies. There are strict requirements to ensure your relative's name and personal details are kept confidential.

## Will I find out about the transplant patients?

Yes. Some information about the patients who have been able to have transplant surgery as a result of your relative's donation may be forwarded to you afterwards if you wish. Information about research studies may also be available.

## How do I ask for more information?

Please contact us using the following details, if you would like to ask for any further information or would like to talk to us at any time.

### To contact the Tissue Co-ordinator (regarding donation)

**Please call:**

**01865 220 076** (office hours)

**01865 741 166** (weekends and after office hours)

Ask for the 'Heart Valve Bank on-call service'

**Or write to:**

**Oxford Heart Valve Bank**

Level 0, Oxford Heart Centre

John Radcliffe Hospital

Oxford OX3 9DU

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **[PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk)**

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