

Writing to Your Donor Family

Many donor families have expressed that a card or a personal note from the recipient offers them some comfort. Here are some guidelines to help you find the right words while protecting your privacy.

The decision to write to your donor family is a very personal one. It's not always easy to express how you feel, or find the right words to say "Thank You" for the gift of life.

Many donor families have said that a card or personal note from the recipient offers them some comfort. Whether or not you decide to write to your donor family—it's your choice.

If you choose to write to the donor family, you may send a greeting card or a letter. Here are some suggestions to consider as you write your message.

Talk about yourself by mentioning:

- Your first name only.
- The state (but not the city) where you live.
- Your job or occupation.
- Your family situation such as marital status, children and grandchildren (using first names only).
- Your hobbies and interests.

Treat religious references with caution.

- Since the religion of your donor's family is unknown, please be sensitive about including religious comments.

Talk about your transplant experience:

- Use simple language.
- Recognize the donor family's generosity and thank them for their gift.
- Write about your personal transplant experience.
- Describe how long you waited for a transplant.
- Explain how the transplant has improved your health and changed your life.
- Describe the impact of your transplant on your own family.
- Explain what has happened in your life since your transplant.

Closing your card or letter:

- Sign your first name only.
- Do not reveal your address, city or phone number.
- Do not reveal the name or location of the hospital or your physician.

Mailing your card or letter:

1. Place your card or envelope in an unsealed envelope.
2. Include a separate piece of paper with your full name and the date of your transplant.
3. Place these items in another envelope and mail them to your transplant center.
4. Allow extra mailing time. As you will read in the next section, it can take several weeks for your letter to reach the donor family.

Once the transplant center receives your letter:

1. The transplant center will forward your letter to OneLegacy's Family Care Department.
2. A OneLegacy coordinator will review it to ensure confidentiality.
3. The coordinator will then contact the donor family to ask if they wish to accept correspondence from recipients.
4. If the donor family does not wish to communicate, OneLegacy will inform your transplant center accordingly. (Be sure to ask them to inform you.)
5. If the donor family does wish to communicate, OneLegacy will forward your letter to them.

Will I hear from the donor family?

You may or may not hear from them. Some donor families say that writing about their loved one and their decision to donate helps them in their grieving process. Other donor families, even though they are comfortable with their decision to donate, prefer privacy and choose not to accept correspondence from transplant recipients at this time. This is their personal decision.

Remember, the donor's family may still be coping with the loss of their loved one. Please communicate in a sensitive manner.