



## Student card



# Cornea recipient is so grateful to see clearly

**Retired engineer Ambrose Field was amazed at the difference cornea transplants made to his life.**

"The transformation was remarkable," says Ambrose. "I sat in the garden and not only could I see the flowers more clearly, I could even count the petals."

Ambrose, aged 85, and great-grandfather of three, had his first cornea transplant in 1998 after he was diagnosed with cataracts and wear and tear on the cornea which made reading extremely difficult. He had a second cornea transplant in 2001.

**After I had the second transplant I began to wonder about the people who had given me this gift.**

Ambrose wrote letters of thanks to the families of the donors – whose details remain strictly confidential – and asked the donor co-ordinators to pass on his letters. Eventually he received a letter from the daughter-in-law of his first donor asking if they could meet, which they did.

"I just think it was a wonderful thing for the family to do," says Ambrose.



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**NHS**  
**Blood and Transplant**



## Fact file

- 1 The cornea is the thin film of clear tissue at the front of the eye. It is the window that filters light coming into the eye and protects it from foreign objects.
- 2 The most common reason for a person needing a cornea transplant is when the cornea becomes distorted into a cone shape (a condition called keratoconus). This interferes with the way light is filtered into the eye: vision becomes increasingly blurred and may eventually be lost altogether.
- 3 Unlike organs, corneas and other tissue can be donated up to 24 hours after a person has died.
- 4 Corneas can be donated by older people, and may also be transplanted into older people.

## Live debates

Choose one or more of the following statements to debate as a group. Write the arguments for and against the statements and decide which side you are on. Do all the members of your group agree?

- "I don't think it's right to cut up bodies after they are dead, especially not your eyes."
- "I'm OK about organ and tissue donation, but I wouldn't want to upset my family."
- "It's no surprise that people's sight goes as they get older. They should just live with it."

## Getting into their shoes

- Before Ambrose Field had his cornea transplants he couldn't read or see the flowers in his garden. With the new corneas his vision was restored. Write a diary entry for the day Ambrose was able to enjoy his garden again.
- What might Ambrose have written to the donor families? What might they say in reply about why they allowed a loved one to donate their corneas after their death?
- What would you say or do if you were very keen to register as a donor but your parents were really against the idea?