

Communicating with your transplant recipient

Your decision about whether to connect with your transplant recipient after donation is a personal one. Many emotions and multiple factors might influence this decision. Keep in mind that the same is true for your recipient. Some will want to connect and others won't. There is no right or wrong choice for either the donor or recipient. You have to make the best choice for you.

Types of communication

- **Anonymous communication**

You and your recipient can only share correspondence that does not personally identify you. This type of communication can begin immediately following donation and will be shared with your recipient after transplant day.

- **Direct communication**

You and your recipient can share names and contact information, only if **BOTH** of you agree. Direct communication requires a waiting period of at least a year, sometimes longer and may never be allowed depending on where your recipient is located.

If your recipient lives in the U.S.

Anonymous communication between donor and recipient may start as early as transplant day.

Direct communication may begin after a year.

If your recipient lives outside the U.S.

International registries have their own rules to follow. Please check with your NMDPSM coordinator to find out the rules in place for the country your recipient lives in.

Communication in the first year

- Tell your NMDP coordinator you want to send anonymous communication to your recipient. They will help you. If you lost contact with your coordinator, contact Donor Advocacy at advocate@nmdp.org for guidance.
- Email your anonymous communication to your coordinator (or designated person). It will be reviewed to ensure it does not include personally identifying information.
- Your communication will be forwarded to your recipient's Transplant Center. Please note, the review of your communication and delivery to your recipient can take several weeks or longer.
- Please only send electronic correspondence. This could be an email or a handwritten note/card that is photographed and emailed. Gifts are not allowed.
- Your communication cannot include:
 - Personal names, including nicknames or initials for you, your family members, friends, pets or doctors. You can use general words like mom, dad, brother or sister
 - Personal dates, such as birthdays or anniversaries
 - Photographs

- Organizational names, including names of hospitals, employer, sports teams, your registry or military branch
- Any location more specific than your country, including landmarks, regions, associations or local community groups

Communication after the first year

- Tell your NMDP coordinator you want to share contact information with your recipient directly. They will tell you if it's possible to have direct contact and if so, you will need to fill out a consent form.
- Upon receiving your completed consent form, your coordinator will make the request for you.
- In many cases, direct contact is possible after a waiting period of at least 1 year after transplant but each case is unique.
- Anonymous communication can continue if you do not wish to share your identity.

Things to consider



Do you wonder what to say to your recipient?

Keep in mind, you don't have to write a lot. Often recipients appreciate short, simple notes. A note that says you're thinking of them can be very meaningful.



Do you plan to request direct communication with your recipient?

Consider starting with anonymous communication first. Then you can decide if you feel comfortable with direct communication. Keep in mind that your recipient may not wish to be in direct communication.



Before requesting direct communication, it may be helpful to think about the following:

- How will you feel if your recipient does not share your interest in connecting?
- If your recipient is interested in contact, how will you feel if the type of relationship they'd like is different than what you'd hoped for?
- Think about what information you're comfortable sharing with your recipient.
- Remember that the transplant journey for your recipient doesn't end the day they receive your cells. Their challenges may continue for months or years, and sometimes this impacts their interest or ability to connect.
- If you'd like to talk with someone for help processing this decision, we will connect you with the Donor Services Social Worker. Reach out to advocate@nmdp.org.

Who to contact for help

If you've lost contact with your coordinator or have other questions, contact **NMDP Donor Advocacy** for help.

Call: 1-800-526-7809, ext. 8710

Email: advocate@nmdp.org

Visit: [BeTheMatch.org/PatientContact](https://www.nmdp.org/PatientContact)