

by a living donor are less than 1 in 2.3 million. This means that in the UK, we would expect an infection to be passed on by one of these grafts once in every 500 years. There are no documented cases in the UK of any infectious disease being transmitted from a donor to a patient, by a tissue graft supplied through an NHS tissue bank.

There is at present no blood test available for variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease (vCJD) and we do not have any treatment for it. Although the risk of transmitting vCJD through a tissue transplant is believed to be very low, it cannot be ruled out.

### **What should I do if I am worried about receiving a tissue transplant?**

If you have any concerns you should discuss these with your doctor. If you don't understand what you are told or if you want to know more, don't hesitate to ask for more information.

### **Making the decision**

When you are satisfied that your doctor has fully explained the operation, the alternatives and the risks, you need to decide whether or not you wish to have the tissue transplant. Only you can make this decision.

**If you would like to know more about tissue donation, the people who donate tissues and the patients who receive them, please visit:**

**[www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/tissuedonation](http://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/tissuedonation)**

# Receiving a Human Tissue Transplant

Like all medical treatments, the decision to offer a tissue transplant to a patient is made only after careful consideration. In making that decision your (or your child's) doctor will balance the risk of you having a transplant against the risk of you not having one.

Please note this patient information leaflet does not replace the guidance provided by your treating clinician(s). Your clinician(s) should advise you of the options that exist for your treatment, advise of alternative treatment and associated risks. Your clinician should ensure that you are aware of the material risks of injury associated with this treatment. If you are unsure about any aspects of your treatment/care ask your clinician(s) to explain.

## Why might I need a tissue transplant?

Tissue transplants can be used to treat many conditions. You may need a transplant to:

- replace diseased or damaged bone and tendons
- heal severe wounds caused by burns
- replace diseased heart valves or repair a deformity in your or your child's heart
- replace diseased or damaged corneas.

## Things to discuss with your doctor

### Is a tissue transplant my only option?

Some operations cannot be carried out without using a tissue transplant from another person. In other cases, it is sometimes possible to use tissue from your own body, or a synthetic graft. Ask your doctor to explain why a tissue transplant is needed, or if there are any other treatments available.

### Are tissue transplants safe?

Most surgical procedures are routine, but no procedure is completely risk free. There is a small risk that human tissue donated from another person may carry infections.

We take many precautions to ensure that tissues are as safe as possible:

- All tissues are donated by unpaid donors for altruistic reasons. Every tissue donor's health and medical history is carefully checked. Very specific questions are asked to help rule out anyone who may pass on infection.
- Blood samples from tissue donors are tested for infections which we know can be passed on in blood and tissues, such as hepatitis B and C viruses, and HIV. Any donated tissue that fails these tests is discarded.

It is not possible to state the precise risk of disease transmission for individual tissue grafts, however compared to other everyday risks, the likelihood of getting an infection from a tissue transplant is very low. For example, it has been estimated that the risks of transmitting hepatitis B or C through a bone graft donated