



WILL I HAVE TO TAKE 'IMMUNOSUPPRESSANT' DRUGS AFTER SURGERY?

Unlike patients who receive organ transplants (such as kidney or heart transplants) it will not be necessary for you to take any medications specifically related to tissue rejection. You may however be prescribed other medications such as antibiotics, following your surgery.

IS THERE ANY COST ASSOCIATED WITH RECEIVING A GRAFT?

There is no payment made to the donor or donor family for the donated material, nor is there a cost to them.

Australian law prohibits the sale of human tissue. However, a 'fee for service' is approved by the Commonwealth for each graft transplanted. These graft fees are charged to the hospital, and are fully recoverable through the private health funds, or through Medicare if the surgery is performed in a public hospital.

Fees for the supply of graft items incorporate the many costs associated with providing the material, such as laboratory costs, consumables used in the retrieval and processing of the graft, regulatory and quality system costs, and administration costs such as staff wages and insurance.

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INFORMATION FOR RECIPIENTS:

All you need to know about receiving a bone or tissue graft

PlusLife is a not-for-profit organisation
All our grafts are 100% donated and processed in Australia



**Enhancing lives
because of you**

All you need to know about receiving a bone or tissue graft

Some surgical procedures require the use of bone or tissue grafts. In some instances your surgeon may be able to use your own bone (autograft) for your surgery; however for complex procedures a donated graft (allograft) may be required. Your surgeon will request this from PlusLife.

The use of allograft (tissue donated by another person) may be necessary due to the limited availability of your own bone. By using an allograft, your surgeon may be able to avoid performing a second operation to collect your bone to use as graft. This reduces the time under anaesthetic, pain from a potential second surgical site, loss of mobility, and risk of infection at the second surgical site.

WHAT IS PLUSLIFE?

PlusLife (Perth Bone and Tissue Bank Inc.) is a not-for-profit organisation which coordinates the collection, screening, storage and distribution of donated human bone and tissue graft materials for surgical procedures.

PlusLife is regulated and licensed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, which is the auditing body of the Commonwealth Department of Health.

WHERE DOES THE GRAFT MATERIAL COME FROM?

There are two types of bone donation:

- Patients having hip replacement surgery can donate the ball part of the hip joint (femoral head).
- Similar to organ donation, otherwise healthy people may elect to become a bone and tissue donor as a result of their unexpected death.

With the consent of the next of kin, donation of long bone (and associated tissue such as tendons, ligaments & fascia) can occur after death.

HOW CAN DONATED BONE & TISSUE BE USED?

Bone and tissue grafts can be used in many ways to aid patients who require surgery to repair defects/injuries.

Donated bone is very valuable for use for patients who may require bone tumour surgery, spinal surgery, hip revision surgery and a variety of general orthopaedic procedures.

Bone grafts are often used in conjunction with prosthetic implants such as metal hip implants, plates and screws. Once implanted into the recipient the bone graft does not grow, but stimulates the recipient's bone to grow into the graft to repair areas of lost bone.

Use of tissue grafts such as tendons, ligaments and fascia is also common.

It is not necessary for the donor and recipient to be tissue matched, as for the transplant of organs. However, occasionally Rhesus negative graft may be requested for female recipients of child bearing age

HOW ARE DONORS SCREENED?

Strict donor selection criteria and regulatory controls related to the screening and testing of donors and donated material exist. A thorough review of the donor's medical and social history is obtained.

A variety of laboratory specimens are collected from the donor for routine testing, to exclude infectious diseases which could be transmitted to a recipient.

The donor's blood is tested in the laboratory for a wide range of infectious diseases including: Syphilis, Hepatitis B & C and HIV (AIDS)

Swabs are cultured to ensure there has been no contamination during the collection process, and a bone chip is examined by a Pathologist.

Donated bone and tissue is frozen at -70°C awaiting clearance from the laboratory. Most tissue is processed in our clean room to produce special types of graft which meet surgical requirements and which also reduce wastage of this precious gift.

Processing involves removing soft tissue from the bone under strict environmental controls, after which the bone is cut and packaged into individual graft items. Checks for microbial contamination are conducted throughout processing. The graft is then irradiated as the last processing step before being released for transplantation.

WHAT IS THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION OF DISEASE?

Bone graft procedures are very common. The demand for human graft materials is growing, and bone and tissue donations assist many patients undergoing complex surgical procedures, thereby improving mobility and function.

There is a remarkable record of safety with tissue grafts and strict regulatory controls monitor the donation and transplantation of tissue in Australia.

You should be aware that even with rigorous testing procedures, there does remain a very small risk of disease transmission. However, it is very important to reiterate, it is an extremely low risk and there are exhaustive steps taken to ensure screening, testing and processing are performed according to strict regulations and guidelines.



RECEIVING GRAFT MATERIAL

Your surgeon, or a doctor in the hospital, will discuss with you the use of graft for your operation. If you have any questions or concerns, you should discuss them with your surgeon.

Your surgeon will order the graft to be delivered on the day of surgery.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE GRAFT AFTER THE TRANSPLANT?

Bone and tissue grafts don't grow. They are incorporated into the recipient's body through conversion into new bone or soft tissue.

