

# Healthy Habits

March 2006

Tips for reaching and maintaining your optimum state of health

## March is National Eye Donor Month

Corneal transplants are one of the most frequently performed human transplant procedures. Since 1961, more than 550,000 corneal transplants have been performed, restoring sight to men, women, and children ranging in age from nine days to 103 years. Over 90% of all corneal transplant operations successfully restore the corneal recipient's vision. However, regardless of how skilled the doctors are or how long the waiting list of prospective transplant recipients, what's needed the most is you.

### Will you give the Gift of Sight?

The cornea is the clear tissue covering the front of the eye. It is the main focusing element of the eye. Vision will be dramatically reduced if the cornea becomes cloudy from disease, injury or infection. In severe cases, corneal blindness may result. Surgically, doctors can replace a disc-shaped segment of an impaired cornea with a similarly shaped piece of a healthy donor cornea and restore or significantly improve vision. Because there is no substitute for human tissue, the transplantation process depends upon the gift of corneal donation, a gift only you can give.

### Vision, um...less than perfect?

Age, poor eyesight or even cataracts do not prevent you from being a donor. After careful evaluation, corneas determined to be unsuitable for transplant may still be used for medical research and teaching. Research on glaucoma, retinal disease, eye complications of diabetes and other sight disorders helps to advance the discovery of the cause and effects of these conditions. This is what leads to new treatments and new cures for people of all ages, races, and backgrounds. The bottom line is, even if your eyes aren't perfect, your gift is.



Giving the Gift of Sight ensures that your vision lives on.

Find out more at [www.restoresight.org](http://www.restoresight.org)

### What is your vision?

Eyes may not truly save lives, as other organs may, but they, in turn, can certainly improve life for the recipients and their loved ones in ways that other organs cannot. Eyesight restoration is truly an immeasurable benefit to the quality of a donor recipient's life. The greatest part about organ donation is the ability, as a final act, to help others that so desperately need it. By signing a donor card, denoting your driver's license, or joining an online registry at sites such as [www.save7lives.org](http://www.save7lives.org), you can quickly and easily designate your eyes (and other organs) for donation. There is never any charge to you or your loved ones nor is there any delay in your pre-planned arrangements or proceedings. Non-profit organizations that specialize in obtaining, medically evaluating and distributing eyes donated for use in corneal transplantation, research, and education, will handle the rest. Just make sure that you also talk with your loved ones about your decision, so that your wishes are clear. Your selflessness may even encourage them to follow suit. There are hundreds of thousands of people stand to benefit from your sight restoring gift. So, if you haven't already, make the decision today to give a gift that lasts more than a lifetime.

*The material contained in Healthy Habits is not intended to be medical advice on any particular matter. Readers should seek appropriate professional advice before acting on the basis of any information contained in this publication. This information is provided courtesy of Optima Health.*