

Tej Kohli Foundation Cornea Transplant Program in India

Tej Kohli Foundation in Collaboration with a local NGO and Eye Institute launches a Cornea Transplant and Eye Donation awareness program in India.

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine that you've seen nothing of the world and yourself. You will not have the slightest idea what things look like when you just touch them. Eyes are an important part of human body, perhaps more important than all other senses. Without eyes a person is only 20 percent living, since he is oblivious of the 80 percent of life's experiences which are perceived through eyes.

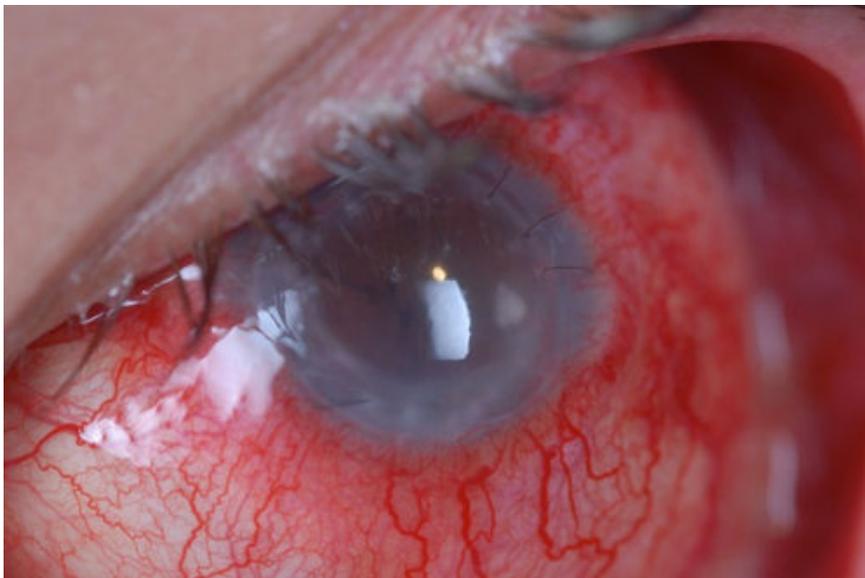
Although it's not a matter of comparison, but just think of a person who has never seen a sunrise, who is blind; who has never seen colors, who has never seen the sky, the birds, the butterflies, the moon, the oceans, the mountains and everything that is beautiful, who is not blessed with what you have - the vision. And you'll realize how lucky you are!

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world today, ironically, it is also a home to one of the largest populations of visually impaired. Of the 45 million blind people in the world, a whopping 15 million reside in India.

Causes of Blindness

Defective or damaged corneas are the leading cause of blindness globally besides being the most common cause of blindness in India. Although corneal blindness is reversible, ironically, there are not enough eye donors whose eyes can be used for corneal transplants.

Against the yearly demand of 100,000 corneas only 10000 are available, with less than 5000 transplant surgeries are being done annually. This is primarily due to lack of awareness and ignorance, regarding eye donation and willingness to pledge eyes for donation.



How and Who can Donate?

If you want to become an eye donor, you must share your noble intentions with your family members who may be asked to consent to eye donation at the time of death. You can bequeath your eyes by taking a pledge with any eye bank. After you've given your pledge, apply for a donor card and always carry it with you. This way if a fatal accident occurs they will be sure to honor your wishes. Your driver's license should also indicate your desire to donate.

Anyone who is above one year of age can become an eye donor. There is no cost involved. All eyes can be used for transplant, notwithstanding how old are you. It doesn't matter if you wear glasses, or suffer from cataract,

diabetes or hypertension, or have had an eye surgery, you can still be a donor. If your eyes are not suitable for transplant, they can still be used for research and education purposes.

Why Donate Eyes?

To begin with, even though for a selfish reason – our eyes will live on even when we are no more.

What is more, our eyes will light up the lives of two corneal blind people. And last but not the least, giving someone the gift of sight is perhaps most overwhelming gesture of selfless charity.

Some Quick facts about Eye Donation and Corneal Transplants

- Eye donation can help restore vision through corneal transplant and provides blind people an opportunity to live a better, fulfilling life.
- There is a severe lack of eye donors in India. The availability of donated eyes falls far short of its vast requirement.
- According to the Eye Bank Association of America, more than 500,000 corneal transplants have been done since the past 50 years. The procedure has an overall success rate of 90 percent.
- Donated eyes that are not suitable for corneal transplantation can also be used for research and teaching purposes.
- The entire eye cannot be used for transplant, only the cornea, the transparent front of the eye is used.
- Considered as the noblest of all causes, eye donation is supported by all the major religions in world.
- Donation procedures do not start until every effort to save your life has been made. The family members are asked if the deceased has expressed a desire to donate eyes.
- Your decision to become a donor can make a big difference to someone else's life.

Tej Kohli Foundation Corneal Transplant Program

On a recent visit to India, Mr. Tej Kohli, the founder of Tej Kohli Foundation, was deeply moved by the plight of blind people in India and set out on a mission to eradicate it. Tej Kohli foundation in association with a local NGO, and eye institute is aiming to assist over 1000 people in regaining their sight through corneal transplantation. The foundation will also donate 10 million (INR) every month to establish eye camps and run several awareness programs throughout the country.

The foundation is also in the process of opening a clinic in Gurgaon (Haryana), where eye camps will be organized for identifying the needy patients and prospective donors.

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