

MTS

MID-AMERICA TRANSPLANT SERVICES

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Donor Referral Hotline
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June 30, 2009

Dear Funeral Home Professional,

Due to an increasing demand of skin grafts within our community, Mid-America Transplant Services is committed to providing all types of skin grafts for transplant to our medical community and patients in need. These increasing needs mean that we will be recovering skin in a different fashion over the next few weeks. Donor families express their appreciation for being given the option of donation – extending skin donation will enable more families help even more recipients.

Historically, skin was recovered with a dermatome recovering skin about an 18 thousandth of an inch thick. This type of donation has had its challenges for embalming as the capillary bed is cut. This thin skin is currently being used on burn victims.

Starting in July, MTS will also begin recovering 'full thickness' skin from a decedent's back. Please note that this full thickness skin recovered from a donor's back would be dissected to the subcutaneous fat or fascial margin. While this is a thicker skin recovery than you may have previously experienced, embalmers have noted that the removal of the vascular plexus actually minimizes the loss of bodily fluids commonly associated with skin donation. This type of skin donation enables the dermal layer of the skin to be transplanted in a variety of reconstruction following tumor removal.

To aid in the restoration process, we have attached some suggestions/embalming guidelines. We also have two licensed funeral directors on staff that are available to answer questions about restoration and/or embalming. Younger skin donors will primarily donate skin for burn patients and the older donors will primarily donate the 'full thickness' skin.

We appreciate your commitment as an aftercare professional to reaching our shared purpose: to extend the reach of each donor tissue and to offer more life-enhancing and life-restoring transplants for those in need. We hope that you will contact us with any questions you may have – prior to these donations, or after embalming one of these types of donations. Without your expertise in the restorative arts, we would not be able to partner with you to provide excellent service to the donor families in our communities.

Sincerely,



Linda Martin
Senior Director, Tissue Work System

lm/jj

We save lives through excellence in ORGAN & TISSUE donation.

General Embalming Suggestions for the Full Thickness Skin Donor

- **Pack the procurement site with a phenol based cauterant.**
- **Wrap the donation site with plastic wrap to minimize fumes and ensure penetration by the phenol.**
- **Set features and arterially embalm the body. A higher index than normal may be needed, as well as more concentrated solutions may be needed.**
- **Use drying fluids per your normal process, and avoid humectants.**
- **Preservative gels may be helpful. Five to eight hours of drying time may help optimize preservation of procurement sites.**
- **Post-embalming, a highly absorbent preservative compound may be used inside the unionall for additional drying/preservation assurance.**