



**For Immediate Release  
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## **Donor Network of Arizona Champions New Eye Tissue Process** *New procedure for processing eye tissue results in shorter recovery time, lowered risk of rejection following sight-restoring transplant*

**PHOENIX--** Donor Network of Arizona (DNA), the state's federally designated, nonprofit organ procurement organization (OPO) now processes eye tissue that is used in a state-of-the-art surgery to restore vision that has been damaged by disease and cell dystrophy. DNA is also the state's only eye bank accredited by the Eye Bank Association of America and is one of just two OPOs in the country providing this vision-saving tissue. The procedure, descemet's membrane endothelial keratoplasty (DMEK), requires donated cornea tissues. The donated tissues required are the two innermost layers of the cornea and cannot be seen without powerful microscopes.

To perform the DMEK procedure, the surgeon removes damaged and abnormal cells from behind the recipient's cornea. The eye bank prepared donor tissues are then inserted through a small incision, replacing the diseased cells.

Scientific data demonstrates that the DMEK procedure consistently provides the best results for vision restoration with shorter recovery times for specific eye disease. There is also a lowered risk of rejection compared to alternative procedures. In order to offer this sight-restoring tissue, DNA technicians devote hours to learning to manipulate the delicate tissues from donated corneas. Technicians face many challenges, including tissue loss and tearing, which require months of training and proper technique to overcome.

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*Donor Network of Arizona saves and heals lives through our dedicated and passionate work as Arizona's federally designated, nonprofit organ procurement organization. We provide organs to save lives, tissues to heal lives and corneas to restore sight. Arizonans can register as organ, eye and tissue donors when they apply for or renew their ID at the MVD. They can also register online at [DonateLifeAZ.org](http://DonateLifeAZ.org) or by calling 1-800-94-DONOR.*

*Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at @DonateLifeAZ!*



"I am humbled to give a donor's gift of corneal tissue the opportunity to be transplanted," says DNA's Ocular Services Coordinator David Moses CEPT. "We want to honor each donor's wish to share sight, and being able to prepare corneal tissue for the DMEK transplant surgery means we can make the most of each generous donation."

Providing DMEK corneal tissue demonstrates DNA's commitment to supporting ocular transplant surgeons in innovative techniques to meet the needs of individuals with vision loss while making the most of each donor's generous gift of donation.

The first Arizona patient to undergo the DMEK procedure using cornea tissue from an Arizona donor received his transplant on Jan. 11, 2016. In 2015, Arizonans gave the gift of sight to more than 1,000 people through the generosity of eye donation.

Arizonans can sign up as registered organ, eye tissue donors when they apply for or renew their driver's license or ID at the MVD. They can also become donors by signing up online at [DonateLifeAZ.org](http://DonateLifeAZ.org) or calling 1-800-94-DONOR.

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