

How to give blood and organ donation

Giving blood or an organ saves lives. The blood you give is a lifeline in an emergency and for people who need long-term treatments. Organ donation means taking healthy organs and tissues from one person for transplantation into another. It doesn't matter how old you are or what ethnic background you are.

Giving Blood

By donating blood, you are contributing to saving or improving someone's life. Giving blood is a quick and easy process taking an hour. Men can give blood every 12 weeks and women can give blood every 16 weeks. Check that you can give blood by visiting their website.

If you do decide to donate, this is what you can expect to happen:

- when you arrive at the session, you will be asked to read some information and complete a donor health check form. If you are a new donor, you will also have a discussion with a nurse. Remember to have something to eat and drink before you give blood.
- a tiny drop of blood will be taken from your fingertip. This is to check your haemoglobin levels and to ensure that giving blood won't make you anaemic.
- your blood will then be taken. It's usually just under a pint and your body will quickly replace it.
- once your blood has been taken, you will have a short rest before going to the refreshment area for a drink and biscuits.

Contact [NHS Blood and Transplant](#) to locate your nearest blood donor session and make an appointment. There are community venues across Newcastle and Gateshead and the permanent Blood Donor Centre is on Holland Drive which has car parking facilities and wheelchair access.

Organ Donation

Organ donation is a precious gift. There are more than 6,000 people currently waiting for an organ in the UK. Three people die each day while on the waiting list.

The law has changed and will come into effect in Spring 2020. The act is known as Max and Keira's law in honour of a boy who received a heart transplant and the girl who donated it. All adults will be considered to have agreed to be an organ or tissue donor when they die, unless they recorded a decision not to donate or are in an excluded group. The new law will help to reduce the number of people waiting for a life-saving transplant.

Excluded groups include:

- under 18 years old
- lack mental capacity
- did not live in England 12 months before death

To record your decision not to donate, visit the NHS Organ Donor Register or call the NHS BT Line : 0300 303 2094. Remember that withdrawing from the register is not the same as opting out.

Get the [facts about NHS organ donation](#).

How do professionals decide which organs or tissues they can use?

The circumstances in which someone can be a donor are very specific and accounted for only 0.5% of deaths in 2017/18. Organ donation is a tiny and incredibly precious resource. Blood type and tissue types are important in ensuring a suitable match for patients who need a transplant. Specialist healthcare professionals decide in each case which organs and tissues are suitable. One donor can save as many as 9 lives.

In the case of cornea (the only part of the eye that is transplanted) and some other tissue, age does not matter. For other organs it is your physical condition, not age, which is the deciding factor.

Ethnicity

Work has taken place to increase the number of donors from the Black Asian Minority Ethnic Groups (BAME). Although many black and Asian patients are able to receive a transplant from a white donor, for the best match it should come from a donor from the same ethnic background. Blood groups such as O Rhesus positive and B Rhesus positive are more frequent among black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. Some rare blood types are only found within people from these communities.

Black and Asian people are more at risk of illnesses and conditions that could lead to the need for a transplant, such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

Organ donation and beliefs

All the major religions and belief systems in the UK support the principles of organ donation and transplantation and accept that organ donation is an individual choice.

When you register as an organ donor on the NHS Organ Donor Register, you can now state on the registration whether or not you would like the NHS to speak to your family, and anyone else appropriate, about how organ donation can go ahead in line with your faith or belief system. Specialist nurses will ask questions, such as, whether a family or religious figure will have time to say prayers, how washing or dressing requirements in line with your faith will be met and whether a swift burial will still be possible.

There are specific [faith and belief donor cards](#).

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Useful Organisations

NHS Blood and Transplant (Give Blood)

Email: customer.services@nhsbt.nhs.uk

Website: www.blood.co.uk

Address: Holland Drive, NE2 4NQ

NHS Blood and Transplant (Organ Donation)

Email: Enquiries@nhsbt.nhs.uk

Website: <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/>

Telephone: 0300 123 23 23

Address: Communications Directorate, BS34 8RR

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