

Donating your body to science

Donating your body, brain or tissue to a medical school or research establishment is a valuable gift because your donation will become an important resource for training healthcare professionals or for research, and such donations are highly valued by staff and students alike.

What happens if I donate my body to science?

If you donate (or bequest) your body to medical science after you die to a medical institution such as Newcastle University, your body may be used

- to teach anatomy to medical and dental students and other health care professionals
- for surgical training, education or research

If I donate my body, will there be a funeral or memorial service?

Medical schools will usually arrange for donated bodies to be cremated, unless the family request the return of the body for a private burial or cremation.

Medical schools may hold a memorial service. Further information can be obtained directly from the medical school.

How do I arrange to donate my body to medical science?

If you wish to donate your body to science, you should make your wishes known in writing (and witnessed) before you die, and inform your next of kin. The minimum age for donation is 17.

You will need to complete a consent form, which you can get from your local medical school. For Newcastle residents this is Newcastle University Medical School.

- contact [The Bequeathal Secretary – Newcastle University](#) to ask for a bequest pack.
 - discuss your wishes with your next of kin so that they know your intentions and agree to carry out your wishes after your death.
 - complete two Bequest Consent Forms in the presence of a witness. Return one copy to the Bequeathal Secretary so that your name can be included in the register of potential donors. Keep the second copy in a filing system – perhaps with your Will.
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Can anyone donate their body to science?

It's not always possible to guarantee that everyone can donate their body to science. The main reasons that a body may not be accepted for donation are if:

- there has to be a Coroner's post mortem;
- a person dies abroad;
- there is a severe infection (e.g. hepatitis, tuberculosis, HIV, MRSA, septicaemia);
- a person has Alzheimer's disease or senile dementia of unknown cause;
- a person has had a recent operation (where the wound has not healed);
- a person has bed sores, varicose ulcers, oedema.

However, it is possible to consider donations from people who have cancer.

For more details read the [FAQ on the Human Tissue Authority website](#).

What if I am an organ donor?

Medical schools can't usually accept a body if the person has undergone surgery to remove organs for transplantation. However, if after their death, the person is found unsuitable to be an [organ donor](#), then body donation to a medical school can be taken forward by the relatives, solicitor or executor of the will.

What happens when I die?

1. The [The Bequeathal Secretary – Newcastle University](#) should be notified of your death by telephone as soon as possible during normal office hours Mondays to Fridays.
 2. A decision regarding the acceptance of the bequest will be made as quickly as possible. For deaths occurring over a weekend, arrangements should be made for the body to be moved to a local funeral director (with refrigeration facilities); then the Bequeathal Secretary should be telephoned on the next working day.
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If you die away from Newcastle

If the death occurs away from Newcastle, the [Human Tissue Authority](#) should be contacted as soon as possible. The Human Tissue Authority will give you the contact details of the local medical school.

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Useful Organisations

The Bequeathal Secretary – Newcastle University

Email: Anatomy.bequests@ncl.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/sme/engagement/body/>

Telephone: 0191 208 6616

Address: Anatomy and Clinical Skills, NE2 4HH

Human Tissue Authority

Email: enquiries@hta.gov.uk

Website: www.hta.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 7269 1900

Address: 151 Buckingham Palace Road, SW1W 9SZ

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