

# Organ and tissue donation

Your questions answered



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# Introduction

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By donating your organs and/or tissues after you die, you will help save and transform the lives of others.

Deciding if you want to become a donor is very personal and it's important that everyone makes their own decision. This booklet contains answers to the most commonly asked questions about organ and tissue donation and aims to resolve any reservations you might have.

If you want to make a real difference by being an organ or tissue donor after your death, there are two important steps you need to take if you live in England, Scotland or Northern Ireland:

- Join the NHS Organ Donor Register
- Tell your family and friends that you have joined the register and want to be a donor so they can support your decision.

If you live in Wales, a different legislative system exists. So, if you don't register a decision to donate, (opt in), or register that you don't want to donate (opt out), your consent to donate will be deemed. It's still very important if you live in Wales that you tell your family your decision so it doesn't come as a surprise to them at the time of your death and so they can support your decision.

## What is organ donation?

Organ donation is giving an organ to someone else who needs a transplant. This will greatly enhance or save the life of the person who receives the transplanted organ. Organ donation is an amazingly generous act and saves thousands of lives in the UK every year. To ensure that all donated organs are safe, the donor's medical and lifestyle history is assessed at the time of donation.

## Why are even more donors needed?

Around 5,000 people each year in the UK die in circumstances where they can become a donor. Because organs have to be transplanted very

soon after death they can only be donated by someone who has died in a hospital. Usually these patients are on a ventilator in the Intensive Care Unit or Emergency Department, and are declared brain dead or die despite medical treatment, generally as a result of a brain haemorrhage, major accident, or stroke. The number of people, particularly younger people, dying in these circumstances is falling, mainly because of welcome improvements in road safety, medical advances in the treatment of patients, and the prevention of strokes in younger people. Another major reason for the shortage of organs is that many people have not recorded their decision to be a donor after they die on the NHS Organ Donor Register or, as importantly, discussed their decision to be a donor with their families. Families are more likely to support organ donation when they know that is what their relative wanted to do.

## **Which organs can be transplanted?**

You can donate many organs to help those who are in need of a transplant. Many people's lives are saved or transformed by a kidney, heart, liver, lung, pancreas or small bowel transplant. Medical techniques are improving all the time and we may soon be able to perform additional transplants to help even more people. As well as donating organs, you can also choose to donate tissue after your death. Skin, tendons, bone, heart valves, cartilage and eyes can all be donated to repair or rebuild our bodies and improve the lives of thousands of people.

## **Can you donate an organ while you are still alive?**

Across the UK, around 1,000 people each year donate organs while they are still alive to a relative, friend or someone they do not know. The most commonly donated organ by a living person is a kidney. A healthy person can lead a normal life with only one functioning kidney and so is able to donate the other to help someone in need of a kidney transplant. Part of a liver can also be transplanted from a living donor to help someone in need of a liver transplant.

A successful transplant from a living donor is the best treatment option available for most people with kidney disease and offers the recipient the best opportunity of success as living donor kidneys usually last longer than kidneys from those who have died. For all forms of living donor transplants the risk to the donor must be considered

very carefully. Before a living donor transplant can go ahead there are strict regulations to meet and a thorough process of assessment and discussion.

All living donor transplants in the UK are regulated by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA). You can find out more about the work of the HTA at [www.hta.gov.uk](http://www.hta.gov.uk). For further information about living donation and how to contact your nearest transplant centre visit our website [www.organdonation.nhs.uk/livingdonation](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/livingdonation) or, if you live in Scotland, please visit [www.livingdonationscotland.org](http://www.livingdonationscotland.org).

## What is tissue donation?

Human tissue consists of cells within the body that are similar in appearance and have the same function. There are several types of tissue such as skin, bone, tendons, eyes, heart valves and arteries. Donating tissue can dramatically improve the quality of life for others. As many as 50 people can be helped by the donation from one person.

Many kinds of tissue can be donated after death including skin, tendons, bone, heart valves and eyes to help repair or rebuild the lives of thousands of people affected by disease, injury, or birth defects. It is also possible to donate bone or amniotic membrane (part of the placenta) in certain hospitals while you are alive, during hip surgery or an elective caesarean.

Unlike organ donation, you don't need to die in a hospital intensive care unit or emergency department to donate tissue after death. Almost anyone can be considered for tissue donation, and donation needs to take place within 24 to 48 hours of death. To ensure that all donated tissues are safe, the donor's medical and lifestyle history is assessed at the time of donation.

To find out more information about tissue donation visit our website [www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/tissue-donation](http://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/tissue-donation).

# The NHS Organ Donor Register

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## What is the NHS Organ Donor Register?

The NHS Organ Donor Register is a confidential and secure database which records the decision of everyone who has decided what they want to do regarding donating their organs and tissue after they die. It's also the database which medical staff will consult to see if a person has decided to be a donor if they die in circumstances where they are able to donate. If you want to be a donor after your death, please join the NHS Organ Donor Register and discuss your decision with your close family.

## How do I register my decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register?

There are several ways to join the register:

- Online at [www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk)
- By phone on **0300 123 23 23**
- By completing a paper registration form

When registering, you can choose to donate all or some of your organs and tissues.

There are only two ways to join the register **NOT** to donate:

- Online at [www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk)
- By phone on **0300 123 23 23**

You can also register not to be a donor via the Scottish Organ Donation website ([www.organdonationscotland.org](http://www.organdonationscotland.org)), the Welsh Organ Donation website ([www.organdonationwales.org](http://www.organdonationwales.org)) and the Northern Ireland Organ Donation website ([www.organdonationni.info](http://www.organdonationni.info)).

It is important to discuss your decision with your family to ensure that they know your decision.

Organ donation in Wales changed on 1 December 2015. If you haven't registered a decision to opt in or opt out of organ donation, you will be treated as having no objection to be an organ donor. This is called deemed consent. For more information visit

[www.organdonationwales.org](http://www.organdonationwales.org)

## **Why is joining the register so important?**

There is an urgent need for more people to agree to donate: sadly, around three people die every day in the UK in need of an organ. Recording your decision on the register will help medical professionals to respect your donation decision should you die in circumstances where you may be able to donate. It is also an indication for your family of your decision. This is important because we will always approach your family prior to donation.

## **Why do I need to make a decision about whether to become a donor?**

In the UK, organs and tissue from a potential donor will only be used if consent/authorisation has been obtained, either from the individual, nominated/appointed representative, family member, or deemed consent if you live in Wales. Signing up to the NHS Organ Donor Register makes it easier for the NHS to establish your decision and for those closest to you to support it. If your decision is not recorded, your next of kin will be asked to make a decision on your behalf. That's why it's so important to tell your family your decision on organ donation.

## **Can I agree to donate some organs and not others?**

Yes. If you choose to join the NHS Organ Donor Register, then you can specify which organs and/or tissue you would like to donate. Simply tick the appropriate boxes on the form. Remember to let your family know your decision.

## **Can I be a donor if I have an existing medical condition?**

Yes, in most circumstances. Having an illness or medical condition doesn't necessarily prevent a person from becoming an organ or tissue donor. The decision about whether some or all organs or tissue are suitable for transplant is made by a medical specialist at the time of donation, taking into account your medical, travel and social history. There are very few conditions where organ donation is ruled out completely. A person cannot become an organ donor if they have, or are suspected of having, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) or Ebola virus disease. In rare cases, the organs of donors with HIV or hepatitis C have been used to help others with the same conditions. All donors have rigorous checks to guard against previously unrecognised infections.

## **I am unable to give blood. Could I still be an organ donor?**

Yes, even if you don't or can't give blood you can still be a potential organ donor. There may be specific reasons why it has not been possible to donate blood such as having had a blood transfusion (or blood products) since 1 January 1980. Or there may be reasons why you could not give blood because of your health at the time. Sometimes a simple thing like a cold or medication that you are taking can prevent you from donating blood. The decision about whether some or all organs or tissue are suitable for transplant is always made by a medical specialist at the time of donation, taking into account your medical history.

## **Is age a barrier to being an organ donor?**

Some donors are in their 70s and 80s! However, when considering organs and tissue for transplantation there are some age restrictions. Potential donors are always assessed on an individual basis to establish if their organs or tissues are suitable.

## **I think it's against my religion to be an organ donor**

All the major religions of the UK support the principles of organ donation and transplantation and accept that organ donation is an individual choice. If you would like more information please consult your religious advisor, request one of our faith leaflets (available to order from [www.nhsbtleaflets.co.uk](http://www.nhsbtleaflets.co.uk)) or visit our website: [www.organdonation.nhs.uk/religion](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/religion).

## **Will I be sent a donor card once I've registered?**

Yes, we send an organ donor card to everybody who registers to donate for the first time. If you amend your details or re-register we don't send you a new donor card. If you have lost your donor card and would like a replacement you can print your own organ donor card via our website: [www.organdonation.nhs.uk/donor-card](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/donor-card).

Alternatively, contact the Organ Donor Line on **0300 123 23 23**.

## **Do I need to carry a donor card if I join the register?**

An organ donor card is a great way to show you're committed to saving lives. You can carry your card in your purse or wallet as a symbol of your decision to help others. Medical staff will always consult the NHS Organ Donor Register if your organs could be used to help others when you die. However, many people like to keep a card to remind themselves of their donation decision, to help start a conversation with family and friends about their decision, or to encourage others to think about organ donation.

# Changing your mind

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## What should I do if I'm not sure I'm registered?

You can check if you are registered by:

- calling **0300 123 23 23**, or
- writing to us at **FREEPOST RRZKSHUX-SBCK, NHSBT, Fox Den Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8RR**. (Please note, you will need to provide your full name, date of birth and address to find out this information, please also provide a contact number).

## How do I check or update my details on the register?

You can update your details and/or change your donation decision:

- Online at **[www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk)**
- By phone on **0300 123 23 23**
- In writing to: **FREEPOST RRZKSHUX-SBCK, NHSBT, Fox Den Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8RR**. (Please note, you will need to provide your full name, date of birth and address to make any changes, please also provide a contact number).

## Can I change my mind?

Yes. You can change your decision, or withdraw (remove your name) from the register:

- online at **[www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk)**
- by phone on **0300 123 23 23**
- by writing to **FREEPOST RRZKSHUX-SBCK, NHSBT, Fox Den Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8RR**. (Please note, you will need to provide your full name, date of birth and address if making this request in writing, please also provide a contact number).

If you are a resident of Scotland and wish to withdraw your registration you can only do so via the website (**[www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk)**) or in writing.

If you live in Wales and withdraw your registration it will be deemed that you consent to organ donation. If you are certain that you do not want to be an organ donor, you will need to register a decision to 'opt out', via our website ([www.organdonationwales.org](http://www.organdonationwales.org)) or by phone on **0300 123 23 23**.

Make sure you let your family know that you have changed your decision.

## **What happens if my parents, guardian or a person with parental responsibility registered me when I was young without my knowledge?**

To find out if this is the case, and to change any details if necessary, you can use the online form at [www.organdonation.nhs.uk/register](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/register).

Alternatively you can call **0300 123 23 23** or write to us at **FREEPOST RRZKSHUX- SBCK, NHSBT, Fox Den Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8RR** and we will check the register on your behalf or change your details if necessary. Only NHS Blood and Transplant staff have direct access to the data.

If your name was added to the register when you were a child and you die in circumstances where donation can be considered, the medical staff involved will be alerted to the need to approach your next of kin to discuss your last known decision and obtain appropriate support for donation to take place.

In Wales, when you reach your 18th birthday you will be sent a letter informing you that unless you record a decision to opt in or out of organ donation your consent may now be deemed.

## **Will my details be given to other organisations?**

No. The information you provide will only be used by NHS Blood and Transplant to record your decision, and by medical professionals to be able to see your decision in circumstances where you have died or are expected to die shortly. Your personal details will not be passed to any individual or organisation without seeking your explicit consent. Your data may be handled on our behalf by our suppliers and/or in a country not normally covered by the EU data protection law. If so, we will ensure that the data will be protected by EU requirements. More information can be found at [www.nhsbt.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk).

# Discussing donation with your family

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## Why do I need to discuss my decision to be a donor after my death with my family?

Should you die in circumstances that means organ donation may be a possibility, the clinicians caring for you and the specialist nurses in organ donation will discuss organ donation with your next of kin as part of the end of life care discussion. The medical team will access the NHS Organ Donor Register to establish your donation decision before discussing it with your family. By telling your family you want to be an organ donor in the event of your death you can relieve them of the burden of having to make the decision at such a difficult time. So, tell them your decision, let them know you want to be an organ donor.

## What will happen if my relatives don't support my decision?

We know that in most cases families will agree to donation if they know that was their loved one's decision. If the family, or those closest to the person who has died, object to the donation even when their loved one has given their explicit permission (either by joining the NHS Organ Donor Register or by carrying an organ donor card) or deemed consent applies, healthcare professionals will discuss the matter sensitively with the family. They will be encouraged to accept their loved one's decision and it will be made clear that they do not have the legal right to veto or overrule that decision. There may, nevertheless, be cases where it would be inappropriate for donation to go ahead if donation would cause distress to the family.

## What if I have no family or other relatives?

You can still join the NHS Organ Donor Register but, to fulfil your donation decision, healthcare professionals would need to speak to someone else at the time of your death who can advise on your medical and social history. This may be your GP but it's advisable also to tell the person closest to you in life, a friend or close colleague, about your decision.

## **What is a qualifying relationship (or nearest relative in Scotland)?**

Where the decision of a person who has died is not known, the Human Tissue Acts rank people who had a relationship with them. This enables healthcare professionals seeking permission for donation to know who they should approach and in what order. This ranges from a spouse or partner (including civil or same sex partner); parent or child; brother or sister; other relatives, to a friend of long standing.

## **Do I need to write about my organ donation decision in my will?**

No. By the time your will is read it's likely to be far too late for you to become a donor. Therefore, it is important to let your family and friends know that you want to be an organ donor.

## **My relative wants to be a donor. What do I need to do when they die?**

Should your relative or friend die in circumstances in which organ donation may be a possibility, the clinicians caring for the patient and the specialist nurses in organ donation will discuss the option of organ donation with family members. For transplants to be successful, organs must be transplanted very soon after death so they can only be donated by someone who has died in hospital. If you know they had made a decision to donate, it's important that you inform the healthcare professionals during any end of life planning conversations.

# When organs are donated

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## Do people on the register definitely become organ donors?

No. Only a very small number of people die in circumstances where they are able to donate their organs. For transplants to be successful, organs have to be transplanted very soon after death so they can only be donated by someone who has died in hospital in specific circumstances. Usually these patients are on a ventilator in the intensive care unit or emergency department, and are declared brain dead or die despite medical treatment – generally as a result of a brain haemorrhage, major accident, or stroke. That is why we need as many people as possible to join the NHS Organ Donor Register and tell their family their decision.

## Can I be sure doctors will try to save me if I am registered as a potential organ donor?

Yes, you can. Healthcare professionals have a duty of care to save your life first. If, despite their best efforts, death is inevitable, organ and tissue donation will be considered as end of life care discussions start with your family, friends and next of kin. Only when end of life care planning is started is the NHS Organ Donor Register accessed by healthcare professionals and the possibility of organ donation discussed with the patient's family.

## How do they know you are really dead?

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges "*A code of practice for the diagnosis and confirmation of death*" outlines the criteria by which death is diagnosed and confirmed in the UK.

[www.aomrc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Code\\_Practice\\_Confirmation\\_Diagnosis\\_Death\\_1008-4.pdf](http://www.aomrc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Code_Practice_Confirmation_Diagnosis_Death_1008-4.pdf)

The code helps those caring for the dying, by providing safe, timely and consistent criteria for the diagnosis of death. In hospitals the more common circumstance for death to be diagnosed and confirmed is after

the cessation of cardiorespiratory (heart/lung) function. Alternatively, in the intensive care unit, death will sometimes be diagnosed and confirmed in irreversibly comatosed patients receiving artificial interventions which is sustaining cardiorespiratory (heart/lung) function in the absence of a patient's ability to breathe independently. Additional guidance to make this diagnosis in infants less than two month old is provided by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

[www.rcpch.ac.uk/improving-child-health/clinical-guidelines-and-standards/published-rcpch/death-neurological-criteria](http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/improving-child-health/clinical-guidelines-and-standards/published-rcpch/death-neurological-criteria)

Apart from living donation, organs and/or tissues are only removed for transplantation after a person has died. Death is confirmed by doctors who are entirely independent of the transplant team and is done in the same way for people who donate organs as for those who do not.

## **Can you be kept alive with machines?**

No, not if brain stem death has been confirmed as this means the patient is dead. In these cases, a ventilator will keep the body supplied with oxygen and the heart will continue to beat and circulate blood. This preserves the organs so they can be donated for transplant. When the ventilator is turned off the heart will stop beating within a few minutes.

## **Are donors screened to check if they have transmissible diseases?**

Yes. Blood is taken from all potential donors and tested to rule out transmissible diseases and viruses such as HIV and hepatitis. The family of the potential donor is made aware that this procedure is required.

## **Does donation leave the body disfigured?**

Organs and tissue are always removed with the greatest of care and respect. The retrieval of organs takes place in a normal operating theatre under sterile conditions by specialist doctors. Afterwards the surgical incision is carefully closed and covered by a dressing in the normal way.

Tissue can be removed in an operating theatre, mortuary or funeral home. The operation is carried out by specialist healthcare professionals who always ensure that the donor is treated with the utmost respect and dignity. Only those organs and tissue specified by the donor or their family will be removed.

## **Is it possible for family to see the body after donation?**

Yes of course, if that is their wish. Families are given the opportunity to spend time with their loved one after the operation if they wish. Arrangements for viewing the body after donation are the same as after any death.

## **Does a donor's family have to pay the cost of donation?**

No, there is no question of any payment at all. The NHS meets the costs related to the donation of organs and tissue.

## **Can people buy or sell organs?**

No, the transplant laws in the UK absolutely prohibit the sale of human organs or tissue.

## **Does being a donor cause delays to funeral arrangements?**

No. The donation operation is performed as soon as possible after death.

# Transplant recipients

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## Who would get my organs and tissue if I became a donor?

Many elements need to match or be very close to ensure a successful organ transplant. Blood group, age and weight are all considered. For kidney, heart and lung transplants another important factor is tissue type which is much more complex than blood grouping. The best results can be achieved if a perfect match is found.

There is a national list of patients waiting for an organ transplant. For some organs the national list will help identify the best matched patient for an organ or the transplant unit to which the organ is to be offered. Normally, priority is given to those patients who most urgently need a transplant.

NHS Blood and Transplant operates the transplant list and donor organ allocation systems, 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Tissue is very occasionally matched, e.g. for size and tissue type, but otherwise is readily available to any patient who is listed for a transplant.

## Can I agree to donate to some people and not others after I die?

No. Organs and tissue cannot be accepted unless they are freely donated. No absolute conditions can be attached in terms of who the potential recipients are. You can, however, choose which organs and/or tissues you want to donate.

## Could my donated organs and tissue go to a private patient?

Possibly but very rarely. Patients entitled to treatment on the NHS are always given priority for donated organs. These include UK citizens, members of Her Majesty's forces serving abroad and patients covered by a reciprocal health agreement with the UK. Other patients would

only be offered an organ if there were no suitable patients entitled to treatment under the NHS. Every effort is made to ensure that a donated organ does not go to waste if there is someone who can benefit. Donated tissue is made available to any hospital in the UK where there is a patient in need.

## **Could any of my organs or tissue be given to someone in another country?**

Yes, possibly. There is an agreement that any organs that cannot be matched to UK patients are offered to patients in other European countries. Likewise, UK patients benefit from organs offered by other European countries. This co-operation increases the chance of a suitable recipient being found, ensuring that precious organs do not go to waste. Tissue might also be offered to patients in other countries.

## **Would a donor's family ever know who the recipient was?**

Confidentiality is always maintained, except in the case of living donors who usually already know each other. If the donor's family wish, they will be given some brief details such as the age range and sex of the person or persons who have benefited from the donation. Patients who receive organs can obtain similar details about their donors. It is also possible to provide some brief recipient information to donor families for some types of tissue transplant. Those involved may want to exchange anonymous letters of thanks or good wishes which can be arranged via the specialist nurse in organ donation and in some instances donor families and recipients have communicated regularly and eventually arranged to meet.

# Organs for research

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## Could organs or tissue that are removed for transplant be used for research purposes?

Yes, organs or tissues that have been removed for transplant, but are then found not to be suitable for transplantation, can be used for research, but only if there is family consent or authorisation to do so. Enabling these organs to be used for research means that this precious gift is not wasted and can go on to help many others through research. All research studies that receive organs or tissues from NHS Blood and Transplant have to meet stringent approvals before this can happen.

## Can I leave my body for medical education or research after I have donated my organs?

Organs and tissues can be donated for research purposes if other organs and tissues are taken for transplantation. This will be done only if there is clear consent. However, bodies are not accepted for teaching purposes if organs have been donated or if there has been a post-mortem examination. If you live in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, please visit [www.hta.gov.uk/donating-your-body](http://www.hta.gov.uk/donating-your-body) for the latest advice and guidance from the Human Tissue Authority or, if you live in Scotland, please visit [www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Policy/BurialsCremation/BodyDonation](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Policy/BurialsCremation/BodyDonation)

To find out more about whole body donation for research purposes or for anatomical examination please contact the following organisations;

## For England and Wales:

### **The Human Tissue Authority**

151 Buckingham Palace Road  
Victoria,  
London  
SW1W 9SZ  
Tel: 020 7269 1988  
Email: [enquiries@hta.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@hta.gov.uk)

## For Northern Ireland:

### **The Department of Anatomy Queen's University Belfast Medical Biology Centre**

97 Lisburn Road  
Belfast  
BT9 7BL  
Tel: 028 9097 2131

## For Scotland:

### **Contact your nearest medical school:**

**Aberdeen:** Department of Anatomy, University of Aberdeen  
Tel: 01224 274 320 / 01224 272 000

**Dundee:** College of Life Sciences, University of Dundee  
Tel: 01382 388 825

**Edinburgh:** Department of Biomedical Sciences, University of Edinburgh  
Tel: 0131 650 2997 / 0131 650 8318

**Glasgow:** The Anatomy Department, University of Glasgow  
Tel: 0141 330 4296 / 0141 339 8855

**St Andrews:** Department of Anatomy, University of St Andrews  
Tel: 01334 463 601

# Blood donation

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## I am interested in giving blood, what do I do?

Donated blood is an amazing gift to people who need it for an emergency or for ongoing medical treatment. Almost anyone aged 17 to 66 years (or 70 if you have given blood in the last two years), in general good health and weighing between 50kg and 160kg can give blood.

For more information or to book a blood donation appointment visit [www.blood.co.uk](http://www.blood.co.uk) or contact **0300 123 23 23** (if you live in England).

If you live in Wales, please contact the Welsh Blood Service at [www.welsh-blood.org.uk](http://www.welsh-blood.org.uk) (English language)  
[www.welsh-blood.org.uk/cy](http://www.welsh-blood.org.uk/cy) (Welsh language)  
or call **0800 25 22 66**.

If you live in Scotland, contact the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service at [www.scotblood.co.uk](http://www.scotblood.co.uk) or call **0345 90 90 999**.

If you live in Northern Ireland, contact the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service at [www.nibts.hscni.net](http://www.nibts.hscni.net) or call **028 9032 1414**.

# Stem cell donation

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## What is stem cell donation?

Stem cells are special cells produced by bone marrow (the soft tissue found at the centre of certain bones in your body) that can turn into different types of blood cells. This means that they can be used to treat a wide range of blood cancers and disorders. For some patients, a stem cell transplant, also known as a bone marrow transplant, is the only hope of survival.

## How do I register to donate stem cells?

If you are aged between 18 and 40 years old (you will need to register before your 41st birthday) are male and a blood donor, please consider joining when you next donate blood. We are also very keen to hear from females aged 17-40 who are from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic and mixed ethnicity backgrounds. To join, simply tell the staff when you next give blood.

We use these criteria to target the donors that we are short of on the British Bone Marrow Registry. All our donors are made available for searching as potential matches for patients anywhere in the world. For those who wish to become a stem cell donor and do not meet our recruitment criteria, there are still opportunities to join one of our other UK partners; either Anthony Nolan or DKMS (previously Blood Cancer UK). Donors in Wales may consider the Welsh Bone Marrow Donor Registry. Please note that you only need to join one UK registry as we anonymously share your matching information.

If you live in England, you can join the British Bone Marrow Registry when you next give blood, or at the same time as your first donation. We will check that there is no medical reason preventing you from being both a blood donor and a stem cell donor. At the time of your blood donation we will take an extra blood sample, so that for the purposes of the registry we may identify your tissue type from your DNA - the genetic material our bodies are made up from. Please inform the staff at the blood donation session that you wish to join the British Bone Marrow Registry before your blood donation is taken.

## What is the British Bone Marrow Registry?

The British Bone Marrow Registry (BBMR) is part of NHS Blood and Transplant, working in cooperation with the other UK bone marrow / blood donor registries and the NHS Cord Blood Bank.

Stem cell donations from cord blood can be made at specialist hospitals within the NHS. For more information visit [www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/cordblood](http://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/cordblood).

The BBMR holds details of stem cell donors and cord blood donations from across the UK. It is responsible for recruiting, testing and registering blood donors who volunteer to become stem cell donors. It is also part of an international network, performing searches around the world to find suitable stem cell donors.

## How can I get more information?

Please visit [www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/cordblood](http://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/cordblood) or call **0300 123 23 23** (if you live in England).

If you live in Wales contact the Welsh Bone Marrow Donor Registry at [www.welshblood.org.uk](http://www.welshblood.org.uk) (English language)  
[www.welsh-blood.org.uk/cy](http://www.welsh-blood.org.uk/cy) (Welsh language)  
or call **0800 371 502**.

If you live in Scotland, visit the Anthony Nolan Trust website at [www.anthonynolan.org/](http://www.anthonynolan.org/).

If you live in Northern Ireland contact the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service at [www.nibts.hscni.net](http://www.nibts.hscni.net) or call **028 9032 1414**.







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## **NHS Blood and Transplant**

NHS Blood and Transplant saves and improves lives by providing a safe, reliable and efficient supply of blood and associated services to the NHS in England. We are the organ donor organisation for the UK and are responsible for matching and allocating donated organs. We rely on thousands of members of the public who voluntarily donate their blood, organs, tissues and stem cells.

### **For more information**

**Visit** [nhsbt.nhs.uk](https://nhsbt.nhs.uk)

**Email** [enquiries@nhsbt.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@nhsbt.nhs.uk)

**Call** **0300 123 23 23**