Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Return of body parts to patient

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Return of Body Parts to Patient

Patient Information

WWL Theatres - Surgical and Specialist Services

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Introduction

The Trust acknowledges that for some people there is need to request the return of tissue/ body parts, for religious or other beliefs, and the Trust will endeavour to respect and support all patients throughout their request. The Trust will aim to protect and promote dignity of any body part from the time of surgery until the responsibility for the care of the tissue/body part is transferred over to the patient, family, significant other or nominated Undertaker. At any time before, during or after this process, the Trust aims to respect any patient, family member, significant other or staff member by offering any religious support via the Trust Chaplaincy & Spiritual Care services.

I would like to take my body part home

You have requested a body part to be returned to you after surgery. This is possibly due to your religious beliefs. The Trust will endeavour to support and respect these wishes throughout your care, while meeting the requirements from the Human Tissue Authority and Public Health England.

Can the hospital refuse to return my body parts?

The Trust is expected to meet the requirements of the Human Tissue Authority and will ask you how you plan to store your body part. The Trust is unable to return, and has the right to refuse, any body parts for use other than for a religious or belief nature, for example, art works or similar.

Will I need to give consent?

The Doctor will ask you to sign a consent form before the surgery.

Am I able to have any religious/belief support through the hospital?

We understand this is an important and emotional time for you. We will aim to always provide dignity and respect for your body part. The hospital Chaplaincy is available to provide religious support/guidance/assistance or advice at any point before or after your surgery. They can be contacted on telephone **01942 822324.**

What if I have an infection?

If your doctor suspects the presence of an infection before the surgery, they will request further advice from the Infection Prevention and Control Team, along with the Consultant Microbiologist. This may involve them contacting Public Health England. Any decision made by Public Health England pertaining to returning or disposing of the body part will be adhered to by the Trust. Your doctor will explain to you in full any reason given which may affect your request for returning your body part.

When can I take the body part home?

You will need to arrange for collection on the day of surgery. The surgical teams can organise for your body part to be collected from the ward where you are being cared for, or if you are involving a nominated Undertaker, the collection can be arranged directly from the Operating Theatre within 90 minutes from the end of your surgery.

How will my body part be returned to me?

The body part will be returned in a sealed container and must be kept secured and closed while on hospital premises.

Who can take the body part home if I am not able?

If you are unable to take home your body part on the day of surgery, you can nominate a relative, religious leader, significant other or nominated Undertaker to take responsibility on

your behalf.

What if the body part needs to be analysed in the laboratory?

Your doctor may request the body part is sent to the laboratory for analysis to gather further information and aid any future treatment for you. This will be discussed with you before surgery. Your doctor will inform the Infection Prevention and Control Team and Consultant Microbiologist of the request to return your body part after analysis. They will aim to return the body part to you, though in some instances this may not be practical due to the nature of some testing criteria.

Do I need to sign for the body part?

Either you or a nominated person will be asked to sign for receipt/release of the tissue/body part. This will be a form transferring the responsibility from the hospital to you. Once this has been signed, either you or your nominated person will take full responsibility for the body part.

What happens if I wish for the body part to be embalmed?

Any embalming will be the responsibility of you via a nominated Undertaker acting on your behalf. You will need to inform your Doctor at the time of your request. You will be responsible for organising the Undertaker service.

What will happen if I don’t collect the body part following my request?

Any body part left uncollected will be disposed of as per the Human Tissue Authority requirements. The Trust requests all body parts are collected within 90 minutes following the end of your surgery by you, a family member, significant other, Religious Leader or nominated Undertaker.

What will happen if I change my mind after I take receipt of my body part?

Once in your care, if you decide to dispose of the body part outside of burial/cremation/religious/belief ceremony, the Trust requests that you contact your local Public Health England department for advice on appropriate disposal.



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