

# Patient information: Requesting for an amputated limb to be returned after surgery

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق بسيط الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

## Request and consent

As a patient at Mersey and West Lancashire (MWL) Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, we can support you with intentions and wishes to have a limb or part thereof, returned after it has been amputated, for burial or retention purposes.

This may be for spiritual and religious beliefs and should be discussed with your clinician at the earliest opportunity before surgery. Please inform the clinician if you wish to discuss it with the hospital Chaplain.

Limbs or parts of, can be returned where no known infection would cause concern. This leaflet does not cover:

- foetal tissue
- blood
- body fluids
- tissue slides
- teeth extractions
- screws
- implants
- pacemakers
- medical implants being removed or organs, other than amputated limbs or parts thereof

This information leaflet will explain how this request can be facilitated and the restrictions that could prevent a return of the limb.

**There may be students and observers present during your consultation as part of their ongoing training. Please let the staff know if you do not wish any students to be present during your attendance.**

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like a chaperone present during your procedure.**

## Waiver of liability

When a patient would like their limb returned to them after surgery, the clinician will need to discuss the conditions, as set out in the waiver of liability, which forms part of the consent process.

- A maximum time frame of 1 month from the date of amputation will be applied in all cases, unless a special request is justifiable. If the limb has not been collected within this timeframe the Trust will dispose of it in the clinical waste, where it will be incinerated as per Waste Management Policy.
- Should any infection be noted before surgery, the decision to return the body part will be requested from the Infection Control Team and UK Health Security Agency.
- You should be aware of the risk and safe transit of the limb, to avoid any leak of such material. A watertight container for transportation of the body bag will need to be considered (guidance on HSE website 'Transport of infectious substances under UN3373).
- You (the patient), a family member or nominated other takes full responsibility for the limb once it has been passed over. The transfer of the limb will take place in the mortuary.
- It is also the responsibility of the patient to appoint a funeral director who will arrange an appointment with the mortuary to collect the limb, if being returned for funeral purposes. This must be done within the 1 month timeframe from amputation. If after the 1 month timeframe the limb has not been collected, it will be disposed of as anatomical clinical waste.

Should at any stage after surgery a decision be made to dispose of the limb outside of standard burial procedure, the patient would be responsible for contacting the local Public Health Department for advice on the correct disposal of the limb. Patients wishing to preserve limbs in resin/plastination, must provide details and assurance of safe storage after collection.

Should the patient wish to arrange an interment abroad they will need to arrange this with a local undertaker or your Iman/Rabbi. When this request is made, a free from infection letter will be required from the consultant in charge and should be discussed preoperatively with the surgical team.

## Waiver of liability

The limb will only be opened for viewing by the mortuary staff while on Trust premises. The patient's family member or nominated other collecting the limb, must bring with them 3 points of identity, 1 of which must have a recent photograph (ideally a passport or photo driving licence). The ID must include the patient's address, name and date of birth. This is standard process in the mortuary as they follow Human Tissue Authority (HTA) recommendations.

If the limb requires embalming, the patient should prior inform the undertaker who will be collecting the limb from the mortuary, so it can be collected ideally within 90 minutes of conclusion of surgery. The cultural, spiritual and religious beliefs of the person should be respected and communicated between the mortuary and operating surgeon.

In all cases the patient must state who will be collecting the limb and for what purpose ahead of surgery. HTA guidance should be followed as per "Disposal of anatomical specimens, former anatomical specimens, and body parts (2004).

The patient must be made aware that limbs, body parts/tissue cannot be displayed or used for art works or similar.

Should staff suspect that the patient, family member or nominated other will not follow the conditions for return of the limb, they will not be returned without discussion with the UK Health Security Agency and the mortuary manager.

If the patient has any known infection, then advice will be sort by the infection prevention team to assess the safety of returning the limb. This may not be possible due to public health and safety.

If the clinician requires laboratory analysis of the limb, then they should discuss this fully with the patient at the time of request. The infection control team should be contacted to enable conversations with the consultant microbiologist and laboratory, for the validity and risks of returning the limb post laboratory analysis.

The Trust recognises that this can exceed the timeframe of 1 month for collection and a waiver of 3 months will be applied in these circumstances.

### **MWL Teaching Hospitals**

Whiston Hospital, Warrington Road, Prescott, Merseyside, L35 5DR, Telephone: 0151 426 1600

Southport Hospital, Town Lane ,Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN, Telephone: 01704 547 471

Ormskirk Hospital, Dicconson Way, Wigan Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 2AZ, Telephone: 01695 577 111

St Helens Hospital, Marshalls Cross Road, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 3DA, Telephone 01744 26633