



JAMES COOK
UNIVERSITY
AUSTRALIA

INFORMATION FOR DONORS AND THEIR NEXT OF KIN

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ **PRIOR** TO COMPLETING THE DONOR CONSENT FORM. YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO MAKE THIS INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO YOUR NOMINATED NEXT OF KIN IF YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A DONOR. IT IS YOUR NEXT OF KIN THE BEQUEST COORDINATOR WILL COMMUNICATE WITH AT TIME OF DEATH. NEXT OF KIN NEED TO BE AWARE OF HOW THE BODY DONATION PROGRAM WORKS TO MINIMISE ANY DISTRESS TO THEM AT THAT DIFFICULT TIME.

The Discipline of Anatomy and Pathology, in the Division of Tropical Health and Medicine at James Cook University (JCU or 'the University'), runs a donor bequest program for the purposes of teaching, examination, study and investigation of human anatomy and pathology.

Most of the bodies donated to the program are used in the education of anatomical sciences to North Queensland's future doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, nurses, pharmacists, sports scientists and practitioners, and research scientists. Some bodies are used for the advanced training of surgeons and other specialists and some contribute to the investigation of human anatomy and pathology.

The use of human bodies for teaching and research is strictly governed by legislation, in particular, the Transplantation and Anatomy Act (1979) and the Transplantation and Anatomy Regulation 2017.

Because of this legislation, donated bodies are treated with great care and respect, and stored/used in a secure facility.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Who can apply to become a donor?

Anyone who is:

- over 18 years of age
- lives within 400km of Townsville
- has no disqualifying conditions such as:
 - Significantly affected by certain medical conditions or procedures, such as amputation of a limb, recent unhealed surgical wounds, unhealed bed sores, or disease such as gangrene
 - Whole organ donation
 - Obese (or weighing 90 kg or more) or emaciated (or weighing less than 40 kg)
 - Spent time which adds up to 6 months or more in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man during 1 January 1980 through to 31 December 1996 inclusive
 - Received blood transfusions in the UK since 1 January 1980
- has no disqualifying infectious diseases, for example:
 - AIDS
 - Ebola virus
 - Hepatitis – unspecified
 - Hepatitis – all viral forms
 - Human immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV)
 - COVID/Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)

How do I apply to become a donor?

There are two ways you can apply to become a prospective donor:

1. Visit the James Cook University Human Bequest Program webpage to download the Donor Consent form
2. Email, call or write to the Human Bequest Coordinator at JCU requesting a copy of the Donor Consent form

Once the donor and next-of-kin are fully aware of the process, they should complete the Donor Consent form and send the original copy to the Human Bequest Coordinator. The Human Bequest Coordinator will then send either an acceptance or rejection of registration letter based on the above criteria.

After acceptance of registration, you can include a statement in your will, such as 'I wish, if circumstances at the time permit, to bequeath my body after death for the purposes of teaching and research under the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 and direct that it be offered to the Discipline of Anatomy at James Cook University'.

Once I am a registered donor, will my body automatically be accepted at the time of death?

No. We appreciate your generous donation, but some circumstances may prevent the acceptance of your body. It should be understood that determination of the suitability of a body for donation can only be made at the time of death, since the cause of death may render the donation unsuitable for study. **To avoid undue grief and disappointment to members of your family, they should be made aware of these conditions and exclusions and have alternative funeral arrangements in place just in case.**

JCU is unable to accept your body if:

- more than 24 hours have elapsed between the time of death and notifying the University
- more than 48 hours have elapsed between the time of death and delivery of the body to the University facilities
- the donor dies further than 400km away from Townsville
- the donor has had a recent surgical procedure
- post mortem examination or coroner's inquiry is required
- the physical size and condition of the body is not suitable for embalming
- there are storage limitations at the University
- Death occurs during closure periods. These typically occur at Christmas (2 weeks).
- the family objects to the donation at the time of death
- deterioration of the donor between time of death and arrival at the university
- unforeseen circumstances

PLEASE NOTE: Only Registered Donors (donors who have completed the Donor Consent Form and registration accepted by the University), will be accepted at the time of death.

Are there any costs involved?

No. JCU will cover the costs of the transport and cremation of the bequest.

If JCU is unable to accept the body at time of death then your estate or senior available next of kin will be responsible for making alternative arrangements. No financial obligation is accepted by JCU in these circumstances.

If JCU is unable to accept the body on arrival at the University, the family is advised to make private funeral arrangements at the NOK cost or alternatively a closed cremation will be arranged and with costs met by JCU and the remains returned to the family.

What happens when I die?

At the time of death, the next-of-kin should notify the Human Bequest Coordinator by telephone as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours. Once the Human Bequest Coordinator has completed the necessary checks and certified the cause of death, a decision is made on whether the body may be accepted. The Human Bequest Coordinator will make arrangements for the body to be transported by a professional funeral director to the University, where a final decision is made as to whether or not the body will be accepted into the program. If accepted, the body will be embalmed to preserve the tissues and prevent deterioration prior to use. The body is then used for teaching, study, examination and/or investigation of human anatomy and pathology. Upon completion, your body is then cremated individually, and the ashes either scattered at the memorial garden at Woongarra Crematorium or returned to the Next of Kin.

If, for whatever reason, a bequest cannot be accepted, the family is advised to make private funeral arrangements. No financial obligation is accepted by JCU in these circumstances.

Can I also be an organ donor?

You may be registered as an organ donor and a body donor but if at the time of death organs are removed for organ donation, then the University cannot accept your body.

Can my family have a funeral or a memorial service?

A traditional funeral is not possible because your body must be transferred promptly to the University. The families of many donors hold a memorial service instead.

The University organises an official Commemorative Thanksgiving Service to commemorate donors. Relatives and friends of donors, as well as students and staff of the Division of Tropical Health and Medicine, are invited to attend these ceremonies.

What if my family does not agree with my wish to donate my body?

If a donor's family has any objection to the donation after death, the University reserves the right to decline acceptance of your body.

Can I change my mind about donating my body?

You may withdraw your donation at any time, prior to your death, by notifying the Human Bequest Coordinator of your decision. We will acknowledge by letter that we have received your request.

For further information on the University's Body Donor Program contact:

Human Bequest Coordinator

Discipline of Anatomy

College of Medicine and Dentistry

James Cook University

Townsville QLD 4811

Email: humanbequest.coordinator@jcu.edu.au

Phone: 07 4781 5022