

have had a covid vaccine, dental treatment or taken antibiotics, or have had a cough, sore throat or cold symptoms in the last 28 days, have a heart condition... or if you have ME/CFS.

WHAT ABOUT ORGAN DONATION?

Even though donating blood is off the table, having ME/CFS doesn't prevent a person from becoming an organ donor.

Very few medical conditions exclude organ donation (cancer, ebola, CJD, HIV). Specialists will determine which organs are suitable at the time of donation.

WHAT IS AN ORGAN?

An organ is a part of the body that is composed of more than one tissue and forms a structural unit responsible for a particular function, or functions. Examples that are relevant here include the heart, liver, lungs and kidneys.

CHANGES TO ORGAN DONATION CRITERIA

In 2020, England changed the rules for organ donation to help save more lives.

Unless you have expressly made it known that you don't wish to donate your organs after death, your consent will be assumed.

You can make your wishes known in your will and/or by telling your family.

There are exclusions to this ruling (see page 3). The law in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales are different.

As well as opting out, you can also make decisions about which organs you are happy to donate. You have the option to choose to donate organs such as your heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas and small bowel. You can also choose what to do about donating your corneas and bone.

However you feel about organ donation, your decision is important. It's also important to remember that healthcare



professionals have a duty of care to save your life first! Only when death is inevitable, will organ donation be considered and only at this point would discussions begin with your next-of-kin.

If you really don't want to donate your organs, you can make the choice to opt out. To do this you need to record your decision on the NHS Organ Donation Register: <https://tinyurl.com/54fkv35a>

MOST PEOPLE DO NOT DIE IN CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO DONATE THEIR ORGANS. IN FACT, ONLY AROUND ONE IN 100 PEOPLE WHO DIE IN THE UK ARE USUALLY ABLE TO BE DONORS.

FAMILY

Rest assured that your family will always be consulted before an organ donation goes ahead, even within the 'opt out' system. If your family object to donation, even when you have given your permission, the specialist nurse will discuss the matter with them. They do not have the legal right to overrule your decision, but of course the matter will need to be dealt with sensitively, especially if it would cause great distress to family members.

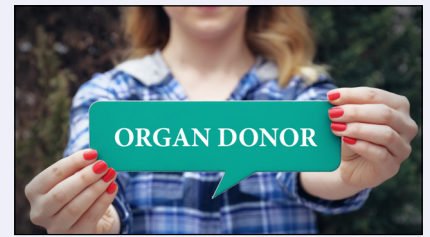
It is therefore really important that you discuss your wishes with your family, but if you feel unable to make a decision, you can nominate someone to make it on your behalf. If you don't have any family you can add someone else, such as a long-standing friend, to the NHS Organ Donor Register and specify that they may act on

your behalf. To do this you'll need them to sign an online form in the presence of a witness.

ORGAN DONATION TIMELINE:

A post-mortem is normally carried out by a local hospital pathologist. Samples of tissue from the brain, spinal cord, skeletal muscle, adrenal glands, and intestinal lining will be removed.

The samples are then fixed to prevent further decay, frozen, and examined. The body is returned to relatives for burial or cremation.



ME CONNECT

Our telephone helpline is available six hours a day every day of the year

10AM – 12NOON
2PM – 4PM
7PM – 9PM

0344 576 5326

MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

We recommend that the medical information in this leaflet is discussed with your doctor. It is not intended to be a substitute for personalised medical advice or treatment. You should consult your doctor whenever a new symptom arises, or an existing symptom worsens. It is important to obtain medical advice that considers other causes and possible treatments. Do not assume that new or worsened symptoms are solely because of ME/CFS.

