



Health
Nepean Blue Mountains
Local Health District

When someone dies in hospital



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Need help interpreting?



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TOGETHER**

Social Work

NBMP-116 | 31 March 2020

The information in this booklet is for guidance only and does not replace consultation/advice by your health care provider.

The staff of Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District will do their best to support you to understand what happens after someone dies in hospital.

Special customs or traditions

We recognise there are many different cultural, spiritual and traditional beliefs and practices associated with death. Please let us know as soon as possible of any particular needs you have.

Available hospital support

Nurses and doctors caring for the patient are there to support the person who has died, their family and/or carer.

Social Workers are counsellors who can support you with any emotional and practical concerns.

Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers are located at some of our hospitals. Please ask staff to contact them if you need support and would like to have a yarn.

Pastoral care are located at some of our hospitals and can support you to arrange any spiritual needs or rituals you may need. They are available to all people regardless of their religion.

Viewing the person who has died in hospital

This is an individual decision and can be an important part of the grieving process for some people. Hospital staff and social workers are available to support you.

You will be able to remain with the person who has died on the ward for a limited amount of time until they are transferred to the mortuary. You are also able to spend some time with the person who has died in our mortuary viewing room.

Notification of death

This will be completed by the treating medical team. A copy of the notification can be provided to you by the hospital if needed. The hospital will forward the notification to the funeral director who will lodge it with the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages. A Death Certificate will then be issued by Births, Deaths and Marriages in the coming weeks.

Patient belongings and valuables

Belongings such as clothing, shoes and toiletries can be collected from the ward. Valuables such as jewellery and money cannot be released until the person lawfully entitled to receive them has been established. The Next of Kin may not be the person lawfully entitled to claim the patient's valuables.

Organ and tissue donation

A donation can save and transform lives. You may be contacted by a coordinator from the NSW Tissue Bank to discuss the wishes of the person who has died. Consent must be obtained before organ and/or tissue donation can proceed. Organ donation can only occur in specific circumstances.

If you need further information about organ and tissue donation please contact the Donations Specialist Nurse at Nepean Hospital or the NSW Tissue Bank.

The Coroner and post mortem (autopsy)

The Coroner investigates sudden and unexpected deaths in order to determine the identity of the person who has died and the date, place, circumstances and medical cause of death. The Coroner also has power to make recommendations following an investigation (inquest) to improve public safety and prevent future deaths.

If the doctor or treating team cannot establish the cause of death, the patient will be referred to the Coroner. The Coroner determines if a post mortem is needed.

If you need further information about the process, please contact the Social Work Department or the Counselling Unit at the NSW Coroners Court.

The Will and/or final instructions

It is important to locate a person's Will, final instructions or any other legal documents. A Will or final instructions may specify choices the person made in relation to the funeral, burial, cremation or interment. Some people die without having left a Will. If you are unsure if the person left a Will, it may be helpful to contact a solicitor or the NSW Trustee & Guardian.

Funeral arrangements

The Fair Trading NSW website offers helpful information on arranging funerals <https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/buying-products-and-services/buying-services/funerals>.

If the funeral has not been prearranged, please contact a funeral director of your choice. Staff cannot recommend funeral directors.

There are no legal requirements for a funeral service or ritual of any kind. The only legal requirement you must comply with, is to make arrangements for the burial, interment or cremation of the deceased person's body through a recognised cemetery or crematorium.

Funeral costs

The cost of a funeral is usually paid for by the person's estate. A Social Worker will be able to guide you through some of the financial options available such as Centrelink, State Insurance Regulatory Authority, Department of Veterans' Affairs, and health and life insurances.

Some families may struggle to afford a funeral. Social Work can also provide advice and/or assistance if this is a concern.

Who you should notify

Most of the people and institutions listed below will need notification in writing and a certified copy of the Death Certificate before an account can be closed by.

- Australian Taxation Office, Roads and Maritime Services
- Banks, financial institutions, superannuation, accountant
- Centrelink, Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Clubs and organisations
- Electoral and post offices
- Employer/professional organisations
- Insurance companies (car, house, life)
- Landlord
- Local doctor/dentist
- Medicare, private health fund
- Nursing home, home care, nursing services
- Solicitor/The Public Trustee
- Telephone, electricity, gas, water companies

Hospital contacts

Social Work

Nepean Hospital	4734 2000
Springwood Hospital	4751 0300
Blue Mountains Hospital	4784 6500
Lithgow Hospital	6350 2300

Donation Specialist Nurse 4734 4138

Resources

Fair Trading NSW <https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/buying-products-and-services/buying-services/funerals>

Centrelink <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au>

Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages 13 77 88

State Insurance Regulatory Authority 13 10 50

NSW Tissue Bank 9382 7855

NSW Coroners Court Counselling Unit 9563 9000

NSW Trustee & Guardian 1300 364 103

Department of Veterans' Affairs 1800 555 254

Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

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Penrith NSW 2751

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Fax: (02) 4734 3737

Web: www.nbmlhd.health.nsw.gov.au

Email: NBMLHD-mail@health.nsw.gov.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NBMLHD

Twitter: @NBMLHD

YouTube: Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

LinkedIn: Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD)

Instagram: @nepeanbluemountains



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