

## Where to find further information

Other leaflets are available on a range of topics from Registration/Bereavement Services.

In particular, you might also find the following leaflets useful:

- Registering a Death
- Buying a Grave
- Green Funerals
- Laying out and caring for the deceased
- Civil Funerals
- Arranging a Secular Service
- Environmentally Friendly Coffins
- Choosing a Memorial

For further information on other leaflets available, or if you require any additional information, please contact us:

Bereavement Services  
Nightingale House  
Balaclava Street  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS18 2AL

Bereavement Services: (01642) 527341/42

Email:  
bereavement.services@stockton.gov.uk

www.stockton.gov.uk/bereavementservices

If you would like this information in any other format or languages please contact 'Bereavement Services' on (01642) 527341/42

إذا كنت ترغب الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغات أو بأشكال أخرى على سبيل المثال بالطبعة الكبيرة أو بالشرائط المسجل فالرجاء الإتصال 'بدايفرستني تيمز' (Bereavement Services) على هاتف رقم 01642 527341/42 ARABIC

欲要這份資訊的其它語言版或其它版式例如大字體印刷/錄音帶，請致電 01642 527341/42 接洽 '多元化隊' (Bereavement Services) MANDARIN

اگر شما این اطلاعات را به زبان یا شکل دیگری مثلا چاپ بزرگ یا بصورت صدا میخواهید لطفاً با تیم نایورسیتی (گوناگونی) (Bereavement Services) با شماره 01642 527341/42 به تماس شوید FARSI

Si vous souhaitez obtenir ces informations dans d'autres langues ou sous un autre format, par exemple, en gros caractères / version audio, veuillez contacter l'équipe "Bereavement Services" au n° 016 42 52 73 41/42 FRENCH

ئەگەر تۆزەت لىن يە نەم زاسارى بە دەستت بەكەوتت بە زمانە كاسى نى ريان بە شىووە بە كى تر بۆ نموونە چاپى گەورە/بان بە تىبى تۆماركراو تىكايە بە يوهەندى بەكە بە تىمى دايفرستنى (Bereavement Services) لە سەر ژمارەى تەلەفون 01642 527341/42 KURDISH

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਬਣਤਰ ਜਾਂ ਢੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ, ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਂ ਟੇਪ/ਸੀ ਡੀ 'ਤੇ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 'Bereavement Services' ਨੂੰ 01642 527341/42 ਨੰਬਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ। PUNJABI

اگر آپ ان معلومات کو کسی بھی اور زبان یا انداز، مثلاً بڑے پرنٹ/آڈیو ٹیپ وغیرہ میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں، تو ڈاؤن لوڈ یا کسی بھی (Bereavement Services) کو اس نمبر پر فون کیجئے 01642 527341/42 URDU

  
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## Embalming

Information about embalming



## What is embalming?

Embalming takes its name from the resinous compounds, or balms, historically used in medicinal treatments and the preservation of bodies.

Embalming is often associated with the ancient Egyptians, whose beliefs required the thorough preservation of their leaders. It was believed that after death, the soul embarked on a journey that could take several thousand years to complete, finally being reunited with the earthly remains to rise from the dead and live with the gods for eternity.

Some religions expressly forbid embalming, but it is more usual for modern faiths to accept embalming as a matter of personal choice, or permit it for the purposes of repatriating the deceased to his or her country of birth.

## Modern embalming

Modern embalming has little in common with the practices of the ancient Egyptians, and is a cosmetic treatment to improve the appearance, rather than a means of preserving the body indefinitely.

Often referred to as 'cosmetic embalming' or 'cosmetic treatment', it has no long-term preservative effect, but is intended to prevent deterioration in the lead up to the funeral and to give a more peaceful, 'life-like' appearance.

This is achieved by

draining the fluid from the body and replacing it with chemicals.

## Is embalming necessary?

A qualified, professional embalmer will advise that embalming can improve the appearance of the deceased, explain the process and assess whether an effective result can be achieved.

There is no legal requirement for a body to be embalmed and in many areas, embalming is not routinely carried out.

It is often thought that embalming will disinfect the body, protecting the living from the risk of infection however; there is no evidence to suggest that a body poses a risk to the living, except if he or she died of a 'notifiable disease' (a highly infectious disease which requires reporting to the health authority). Where the deceased died from such a disease, embalming is strictly forbidden.

In woodland burial sites and environmentally sensitive cemeteries, the burial of embalmed bodies may not be permitted.

If you do not plan to view the body at the chapel of rest, then there appears to be little benefit to be gained from embalming.

## Environmental Issues

Modern embalming fluids have traditionally been a combination of chemicals, including formaldehyde, a volatile chemical known for its preservative, fungicidal and bactericidal properties. Although research into the specific effects of embalming fluids on soil

organisms and air quality is limited, environmentalists will generally disapprove of embalming.

Increased concern for our environment has resulted in a new generation of 'green' embalming fluids becoming available. These products are less harmful to the environment than formaldehyde based products, however, it can be argued that it is more environmentally friendly not to use embalming products at all.

## Do I have a choice?

Yes. Because there is no legal requirement for embalming to take place, it should be the family's decision whether or not their loved one should be embalmed. The Code of Ethics issued by the British Institute of Embalmers states that *the client's informed consent, preferably in writing, must be obtained* before embalming takes place.

Funeral packages and pre-payment plans can vary, depending on the funeral director, and embalming may involve extra costs on the funeral account. If you are unsure, you should ask your funeral director what is included in the funeral package or plan, and make it known to them if you oppose embalming.

Although many families acknowledge the benefit of professional embalming, there are many that comment on the unnatural or waxy appearance that can sometimes result from embalming.

