



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

## Object 6: Pathology pot



### What is it?

A pot is a human organ demonstrating signs of disease, removed during an operation or after death and preserved in a clear container.

### History

Pots were used for many years by medical students to learn about diseases and anatomy. They allow students to see diseases that they wouldn't otherwise encounter. Pots may demonstrate typical features of common diseases such as heart disease or breast cancer, or show diseases rarely seen nowadays such as syphilis or rickets.

### Under threat

The use of pots for teaching has fallen out of fashion over the last twenty years. Pots were typically displayed in pathology 'museums'. With increased pressure to use all available space, many pathology museums have been closed and the pots destroyed.

### The future

Many pathologists are realising that books and the internet are not a good substitute for examining real specimens. Pathologists and scientists are working hard to rescue pathology pots and to maintain the few museums that remain.

### Find out more

To make pathology pots more accessible, the Royal College of Pathologists supports an initiative to develop an online pathology museum. Pots have been photographed and are described by pathologists – to learn more please visit the [e-pathpots website](#).

### Acknowledgments

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