



Anatomical Donations: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who may make an anatomical donation?

Potential donors must be at least 18 years old to make a legal anatomical donation of their own body. In addition, the next of kin, the executor of the estate or a friend of a recently deceased person may make an anatomical gift.

2. Could a bequest be made as a codicil (modification or addendum) to a will?

Yes. Consult an attorney for details. However, to expedite the donation it is recommended that bequeathal forms also be registered with the medical school of your choice or with AMSNY.

3. Does the donor's family have to sign a consent form as well at the time of death to release the body?

No, as long as the donor has completed all of the paperwork for the anatomical gift, they do not need to sign anything. If the donor decides to make an anatomical gift but is unable to complete the paperwork, then the family, healthcare proxy, or executor of the estate may sign on behalf of the donor.

4. Is there a cost to the donor or family?*

In most cases, there is no cost to the donor or family. However, there may be certain circumstances where the body's location may be too far for the medical school to cover 100% of transport. Each donor or donor family should check with their chosen institution to determine if there will be any cost.

5. Can the body become a whole body anatomical gift after organs or tissues are donated?*

In order to provide the best possible learning and research experience for the medical schools, organ and tissue donation makes the body ineligible for a whole body anatomical gift.

An exception is made for eye donations. Arrangements need to be made with an eye bank as well as the medical school. Corneas must be removed immediately following death, and then the body can be prepared as an anatomical gift.

Eye Bank for Sight Restoration
120 Wall St
New York, NY 10005
<http://www.eyedonation.org/>
info@ebsr.org
(212) 742-9000

For more information on organ donation, contact LiveOnNY:

LiveOnNY
460 West 34th St, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10001
<http://www.liveonny.org/>
(646) 291-4444
24 Hour Hospital Referral Line: 1-800-GIFT-4-NY

Anatomical Donations: Frequently Asked Questions

6. Does age, disease amputation or prior surgery make the donation unacceptable?*

As a general rule and within a broad range of pathology most bodies may be used for medical study. The right is reserved to decline a donation for certain virulent disease conditions, major trauma, specific organ removals or amputations, or if an autopsy has been performed. Although not exhaustive the following is a list of conditions that may make donation unacceptable:

- a. Autopsy
- b. Transmittable Diseases
 - i. Hepatitis
 - ii. Tuberculosis
 - iii. HIV
 - iv. Septicemia
- c. Jaundice
- d. Gangrene
- e. Recent surgical incisions
- f. Weight

7. May a body be embalmed before donation?

No. Due to the particular requirement of the medical studies, very special formulas and procedures are used by the schools' funeral directors to ensure lasting and useful preservation of the body. A body, which has been embalmed commercially prior to the delivery to the medical school, may be declined as suitable for anatomical study.

8. How will the hospital know about the whole body anatomical gift?

When possible, the medical schools prefer to have all of the paperwork signed and settled as soon as a decision is made to donate. This will make the process more efficient and less stressful for the family at the time of death. Typically, the medical school you chose to donate to will provide you with a donor card for you to carry in your wallet. We also encourage donors tell their family and friends of their wish to donate upon death.

9. What happens to the body after use for medical education and research?

When arrangements are made to donate a body, the donor's final wishes are discussed with the medical school. Anatomical study typically takes 1-2 years. After that period, the body will be cremated and returned to the family if that is the donor's wish. Otherwise, the body will be cremated and buried by the medical school in a plot owned by the school. Some schools may offer other methods for final disposition, such as scattering of ashes over water (where permitted),

10. Can the family have a viewing in a funeral home if a person donates his/her body to science?

Typically the donor is moved quickly to the medical school. However, depending on the circumstances, a brief showing may be arranged.



Anatomical Donations: Frequently Asked Questions

11. Will the school bury or cremate the body?

The medical school will either cremate and bury the donor, or return the individual to the family. That is up to the donor's family.

12. How long does a school keep the body?

Medical education and research typically takes 1-2 years. However, there may be occasion for the donor to be returned sooner.

13. What happens if the donor is in another state at the time of death?

The medical school cannot cover the cost of transporting a body from another state. If the family or estate pays for the transportation, then the donation process can go through as planned. Otherwise, the donor or his/her family might investigate donating in the other state. AMSNY will help facilitate this.

14. Should body donations be made to any organizations other than a medical or dental school?

We recommend that whole body donations be made only to a medical or dental school or AMSNY. There are many reasons for this, including an assurance that no profit will be made from selling body parts, and that all body parts are accounted for when medical study is completed.

To donate your organs, we recommend you contact the New York Alliance for Donation or LiveOnNY.

New York Alliance for Donation
(518) 326-3237
info@alliancefordonation.org

LiveOnNY
<http://www.liveonny.org/>
(646) 291-4444

15. Are there specific schools that want specific organs?

There are academic institutions that focus on specific areas of the body (e.g., podiatry school), but no commitment can be made that a specific part of any particular body will be used there. However, any body parts that are temporarily transferred on loan to another institution will be tracked, reunited with the rest of the body, and returned for final disposition at the conclusion of anatomical study.

16. Is the family notified of any anatomical/medical findings or research discoveries from the donation?

Since there are often multiple studies running simultaneously, and donor identities are kept confidential from those doing the study, it is impossible to track individual reports from anonymous bodies. This makes it difficult for the medical school to guarantee that the family will be notified of any medical findings or research discoveries.

*** Conditions & requirements for anatomical donation varies slightly between each institution's gift program. To obtain more specific details, please contact the institution directly.**