

Frequently Asked Questions

How long will the body be retained by the program?

The time frame we retain a body varies from three months to three years depending on the scheduling of educational courses and studies.

What happens to the body after the studies are completed?

Upon completion of the studies, each donor is cremated individually in accordance with Tennessee law. At the time of enrollment, you may indicate your wishes regarding the final disposition of your cremains. You may also wish to leave this option to your designated next of kin since circumstances may change from the time you enroll until the time of death.

Can I still donate to your school if I live in another state?

You must be registered with our program and be in the State of Tennessee at the time of death.

What will happen to my personal effects?

Any jewelry or other personal effects should be claimed by the next of kin prior to transport to the program. We will not be responsible for any unclaimed personal effects including, but not limited to, jewelry, medical devices, dentition, etc. All clothing will be discarded.

Will I receive any compensation for my donation?

No. By law, medical schools are not allowed to give money, or purchase a body for donation.

Are any costs involved in the donation of one's body?

We provide the following services free of charge for the donor and their family: transportation from the site of the donor's death within Tennessee, specialized embalming procedures, cremation and interment in our burial site, or the return of ashes to the designated person.

Should I have someone contact the Program when death is imminent?

It is not required, however many families find it reassuring and helpful to check on procedures at that time. We encourage such calls.

HOW TO CONTACT US

PHONE: 615-322-7948

FAX: 615-322-8441

EMAIL:

programcoordinator.adp@vanderbilt.edu

MAIL:

2213 Garland Ave

MRBIV 3450

Nashville, TN 37232-0432

ON THE WEB:

vanderbi.lt/adp

Center for Experiential Learning and Assessment

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY

MEDICAL CENTER

Anatomical Donations Program



at
Vanderbilt University
Medical Center



A Final Act of Caring

“The ultimate donation an individual can give is the gift of their whole body after death to advance the anatomic education and clinical training of medical students, physicians, and other medical personnel.”

Our Mission

The ultimate donation an individual can give is the gift of their whole body after death to advance the anatomic education and clinical training of medical students, physicians, and other medical personnel. Voluntary whole body donations by generous individuals are relied upon as a resource to help physicians and other medical personnel complete their required learning as they prepare themselves to provide outstanding care for the living.

How to Enroll

You can enroll in the Anatomical Donations Program by completing the Enrollment Forms, available on our website, or by contacting our Program Coordinator and requesting a copy be sent to you.

The Enrollment Forms include:

- Anatomical Registration form
- Medical History form
- Uniform Donor Registration form

All of the forms must be completed, signed, witnessed where designated, and returned to the Anatomical Donation Program in order for you to be enrolled in the Program. You will receive a Donor Card in the mail when you have been accepted to the Program.

We do not accept donations decided by the next of kin. Please make an alternative plan. Certain conditions may exclude our Program from accepting your anatomical gift.

Procedures at Time of Death

The Anatomical Donations Program should be notified as soon as possible after death has been pronounced by proper authorities. Personnel in the Program will confirm if the donor is medically acceptable and will arrange for transportation of the body from within the state of Tennessee to our facility. If, however, the donation is rejected due to our exclusion criteria, other options will be discussed with the family.

Services at Time of Death

Unfortunately, it is not possible to have a funeral or hold a viewing for the donor at the time of death. Some families of donors find it comforting to hold a memorial service for the deceased; others plan to have a service held later when the cremains are returned. Some families announce the donation in the obituary and request that memorial gifts be directed toward the Anatomical Donations Program at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Others simply prefer to remain anonymous donors.

Annual Memorial Service

Vanderbilt University Medical Center hosts an Annual Memorial Service. The Memorial Service is a wonderful opportunity to interact with the families of our donors and to show our respect for their generosity.

Exclusions

Since the circumstances that bring about death are rarely predictable, our Program reserves the right to exclude your donation, not limited to, but including the following reasons:

- Infectious Diseases
- Sepsis
- Advanced Decomposition
- Unhealed Wounds or Recent Surgeries
- A BMI greater than 30
- A height greater than 6'4"
- Bodies that have been embalmed
- Bodies that have been autopsied
- Bodies subjected to trauma or acts of violence
- Bodies subjected to organ donation
- Donations outside of Tennessee
- Donations in which time of death cannot be determined or that exceed an acceptable amount of time for the program

The Anatomical Donations Program at VUMC reserves the right to decline a donation, at time of death, for any reason deemed necessary. Please contact the program coordinator for further exclusion criteria not listed above.

Alternate Arrangements

We highly recommend a person who donates his/her entire body have an alternate plan in the event the medical school cannot accept the body at the time of death. As previously mentioned, unforeseen circumstances could cause the Anatomical Donations Program to decline your generous gift. The development of an alternative plan will lessen the stress and confusion on your next of kin or executor at the time of death.

Please visit our website at: vanderbi.lt/adp for updated program information