



Gifts *that* Teach

The Ohio State University College of Medicine
Division of Anatomy | Body Donation Program

*Cylinders from the sand
pouring ceremony held
during the annual memorial
service honoring donors
from the previous year.*



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

The Ohio State University's Body Donation Program:

More Than Six Decades of Education and Research

The Ohio State University's Body Donation Program began in the 1950s, quickly becoming a center of excellence and scholarship. In 1969, the state of Ohio and the university adopted the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act. This act created a legal, well-defined way for individuals to donate their bodies to medical education and research.

Our Donors Come From All Walks of Life:

- Former physicians and nurses appreciative of the opportunity to study and learn about the intricacies of the human body from real-life examples, not just textbooks and 3D models
- Patients who have benefited from a new medical treatment or have unique medical issues worth exploring
- Individuals who want their bodies to be useful after death
- Family members who saw the impact of their loved one's donation and wish to do the same
- And for many, a sense of altruism, as described by this Ohio State medical student:

“It was strange knowing a person, a human being, without knowing anything about their lives, their families, their dreams. But actually, I know so much about them. I know they believed in something larger than themselves. They believed in humanity and morality and hoped to end human suffering. Even in their passing, they wanted to continue to help others ... they had the foresight to ensure they would be able to, with the most selfless gift they could offer: their body.”

Regardless of the reason a person chooses anatomical donation, each donor is appreciated and treated with the utmost compassion, care, dignity and respect according to the highest ethical standards.

How to Arrange the Donation of Your Body

To enroll in Ohio State's Body Donation Program, download the forms or submit your information online at go.osu.edu/bodydonation. You may also call our office at **614-292-4831** to request the materials by mail. To complete your enrollment, please:

1. Review this brochure.
2. Complete the vital statistics page. We will use this information to generate the death certificate at the time of death. This must be filled out as fully as possible. All information provided will remain confidential to the extent allowed by law.

3. Complete the Bequeathal and Cremation Authorization forms. The Bequeathal form requires signatures from the donor, the donor's next of kin and a witness. The Cremation Authorization requires the donor's signature as well as two witnesses.

The donor should sign these forms. If a prospective donor is incapacitated or unable to sign, a legal health care power of attorney (POA) or legally appointed guardian may complete the enrollment forms on the donor's behalf. **A copy of the POA or guardianship paperwork must be submitted along with the donor enrollment forms.** It is against Ohio state law for any other person to sign as the donor without POA or guardianship arrangements in place. If there is any indication otherwise, the donation enrollment process will be stopped.

The completed forms can be returned one of three ways:

Mail: Body Donation Program, 440-L Hamilton Hall, 1645 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43210

E-mail: bodydonor@osumc.edu

Fax: 614-292-7659

Upon receipt, these forms will be processed and a letter of acknowledgement and donor card will be mailed to the address on the enrollment forms. The donor card, which should be carried in your wallet or purse at all times, provides information about your desire to donate and how to reach the program at the time of death.

At the Time of Death

When death occurs, please call the program at 614-292-4831. Our office staff or after-hours answering service are available to assist 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To determine eligibility for donation, a series of questions will be asked about the prospective donor's medical history. (Please refer to this brochure for disqualifying conditions; for example, contagious or infectious disease, emaciation or obesity, ascites.)

This information **must** be provided by a health care provider (e.g., nurse, physician, social worker, chaplain) who has access to the donor's medical chart or file. If the individual is eligible for donation, the program will make arrangements for transportation from place of death to the university.



We strongly recommended that you discuss this decision with your family to better assist them with arrangements at the time of your passing. Time is a factor and your next of kin must be in a position to act immediately following your death.

Final acceptance into the program is not determined until time of death. The program reserves the right to exclude your donation, including, but not limited to, these reasons:

Contagious or infectious disease (including, but not limited to, COVID-19 and variants, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, tuberculosis (TB), MRSA/VRE, C-diff, meningitis, bacterial pneumonia and CJD/vCJD)

- Extreme emaciation or obesity (a donor must weigh at least 80 lbs. and no more than 215 lbs. and have a body mass index (BMI) of at least 16 but not more than 33) at the time of death
- Extreme ascites (accumulation of fluid in the abdomen) or edema (fluid trapped in the body's tissues)
- Severe, permanent contractures of the extremities (e.g., the arms or legs drawn close to the body, body in the fetal position)
- Severe trauma or open wounds (e.g., fractures, lacerations, gangrene)
- Recent surgeries that are still healing or death that has occurred during surgery
- A body that has been autopsied or embalmed
- Organs or tissue donated at the time of death (except the eyes)
- Death occurs outside the state of Ohio
- Current needs of education, training and/or research programs for donors

The program cannot determine a donor's eligibility until the time of death, as health conditions may change from time of enrollment to the person's passing. If an individual is not accepted into the program, the next of kin (or appointed agent) will be responsible for making alternate arrangements with a funeral home at their expense.

Following Donation

Donors can be part of the program for up to two years. Once the education, training and/or research has been completed, the donors are cremated at the program's expense. Each donor is cremated individually in accordance with Ohio law.

Cremated remains are returned to the individual(s) specified on the Authorization for Cremation and Disposition registration paperwork.

For those families choosing not to have the cremated remains returned, the remains will be interred, at the program's expense, in a crypt at the mausoleum at the Silent Home Cemetery, 1576 Lancaster Ave., Reynoldsburg, OH 43068. Families are welcome to visit any time the cemetery is open.

Annual Memorial Service

Every year, the Body Donation Program holds a memorial service to recognize and honor the incredible generosity of our donors. Organized by students who have benefited from these donations, the service celebrates the lives and lasting legacies of the individuals who gave so much to benefit so many. The ceremony is usually held in late summer and is open to the family members and friends of our donors.

For all of the tears, embraces and solemnity of the service, the day's prevailing message is one of reverence and gratitude for the enormity of the donors' generous gifts.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Can my family have a funeral service before donation?

Due to the nature of the donation program, it is not possible for families to hold a traditional funeral service with embalming or viewing after death. We encourage families to hold a memorial service to honor and pay tribute to their loved ones, as these events provide comfort and support while aiding in the grieving process.

Will I be paid for this donation?

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

Are there costs associated with body donation?

For all donors accepted into the program, we will cover the following expenses: transporting the donor's remains from the place of death to the program (within the state of Ohio), the death certificate preparation and filing fee, the donor's cremation and the return (or interment) of the cremated remains. Any other desired services (e.g., purchasing certified copies of the death certificate or submitting an obituary to a newspaper) are at the expense of the donor's next of kin or estate. We encourage each donor to make alternative arrangements with a funeral home in case their donation is not accepted.

May I donate my organs?

Potential donors may register with both the organ donation and body donation programs. However, you may only participate in one program. If your organs are viable for transplantation, the local organ donation program will be contacted and will recover your organs for transplant. If not, we will be contacted and will determine if you meet the donation requirements.



Additionally, in the Spirit of Women Park (at 10th Avenue and Medical Center Drive), a plaque and a tree are dedicated in memory of individuals who made a very personal and unselfish gift to the Anatomy Body Donation Program in support of education and research at The Ohio State University College of Medicine. Friends and family are encouraged to explore the park, relax, reflect and remember their loved one.

How long are donors in the Body Donation Program?

Donors can be part of the program for up to two years. Once the education, training and/or research has been completed, the donors are cremated at the program's expense.

Will my family receive a report about my cause of death?

No. There are no autopsies performed and no pathological reports are prepared. Because many of the students are in their first year of training, they are not at a level of expertise to discern the cause of death. The students will, however, be provided a cause of death (as determined by the donor's doctor) and pertinent medical history to enable them to see the effects of a disease.

Does the program accept out-of-state donations?

The Body Donation Program does not accept out-of-state donations. In the event that death occurs while traveling outside the state of Ohio, our office can provide the family with a list of medical colleges within the state where death occurred. Should the nearest medical school refuse to accept the body for any reason, disposition of the body would become the responsibility of the family or the donor's estate. Alternatively, if you spend extended time in another state (vacationing, visiting relatives, etc.), we suggest that you register as a donor in that state as well.

Will I ever be too old for the Body Donation Program?

While there is no upper age limit, we do not accept persons under the age of 18 years.

How else can I support the Body Donation Program? Can I make a monetary donation?

Monetary donations can be made to honor the memory of a donor or to support the program's initiatives. Donations are deposited into an Anatomy Teaching Fund account to support teaching efforts.

Please make checks payable to:

The Ohio State University

Mail checks to:

The Division of Anatomy
Body Donation Program
440-L Hamilton Hall
1645 Neil Ave.
Columbus, OH 43210

How can I get in touch with the program?

Phone: 614-292-4831

Fax: 614-292-7659

Email: BodyDonor@osumc.edu

Visit our website for the most up-to-date program information:

go.osu.edu/bodydonation

May I withdraw from the Body Donation Program?

You may withdraw your registration at any time by sending a signed and dated letter or email to the program. You will be notified in writing that we have removed your name from the program's database.



All of us are the final beneficiaries of the knowledge gained by students, physicians and researchers. Anatomical gifts are central to the education of physicians, dentists, nurses, physical and occupational therapists and other medical professionals of the future; gifts improve patient care as well as prevention and treatment of medical conditions.



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