

## **Anatomical Gifts Program — Information for Body Donors**

(603) 650-1636

email: [Hanna.riendeau@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Hanna.riendeau@dartmouth.edu)

[www.geiselmed.dartmouth.edu/anatomy/gifts](http://www.geiselmed.dartmouth.edu/anatomy/gifts)

### **General information**

Anatomical dissection plays an important role in modern medical education and research. The Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth (Geisel), through its Anatomical Gifts Program, accepts body donations from persons who desire to leave their bodies to medical science and education. Donors must be 21 or older. They must reside in, and death must occur in New Hampshire or Vermont. We only accept body donations from individuals who have personally registered with us in advance of death.

### **How do I register?**

Two forms must be completed and returned:

- Vital Statistics
- Anatomical Gift Authorization

The Anatomical Gift Authorization is not a contract. It is a document that declares your wish to have your body donated to the Geisel School of Medicine. Three members of your family or other responsible parties should witness your signature on this document. Since signatures are required on the original document, we cannot process requests electronically. Please call the office (603.650.1636) if you would like us to send you the forms in the mail.

When we receive your completed forms, we will send you a wallet size card to carry and two copies of the Anatomical Gifts Authorization. Please keep one copy in your records and give the other to your family members or other responsible parties.

### **May I withdraw at any time?**

Yes. Please notify us in writing that you wish to withdraw from the program.

### **Can I donate the body of a family member?**

No. Geisel accepts body donations only from individuals who have personally registered with us in advance of their death.

### **Does registration insure that my body will be accepted at the time of my death?**

No. The number of registered body donors has increased significantly in the past few years.

Therefore, we reserve the right to decline a body donation if our facility is temporarily full. However, we are an ongoing body donation program and try to accept all registered donors.

Sometimes, we have to decline a body donation if the condition of the body is not suitable for our studies. Conditions that may render a body unsuitable include certain infectious diseases, certain vascular diseases, open wounds (such as unhealed surgery or trauma), and extreme malnutrition or obesity.

### **Alternate arrangements**

Please discuss alternative plans with your family, in the unlikely event that we do not accept your gift of body.

### **What about autopsies or organ donations?**

In order for us to accept a body, the body must remain intact after death. We can not accept body donation if an autopsy has been performed or if organs have been donated.

### **Financial considerations**

Upon acceptance of a body donation, the Geisel School of Medicine will be financially responsible for the following:

- Removal of body from a hospital
- Transportation of the body to Geisel

- Permits for transportation and cremation
- Cremation

The Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth is not responsible for funerals, obituaries, or any other services not specifically mentioned above.

The cost of providing these services is a factor that limits the number of body donations we can accept each year. Monetary contributions to the Anatomical Gifts Program are gratefully accepted and allow us to provide greater support for medical education and research. Please see Gifts in Memoriam.

### **What if death does not occur in a hospital?**

We cannot transport a body until the death certificate is signed by a physician. When death occurs at home, there is often a delay in obtaining the necessary paperwork.

Under these circumstances, it may be necessary for a local funeral director to hold the body until we can transport it. We are not responsible for this expense.

Most of the time, however, when death occurs at home we are able to make all arrangements without cost to the family.

### **Final Disposition**

Our studies may take as long as two years to complete. All bodies are cremated at the completion of our studies.

On occasion, a body has a pacemaker, artificial limb or joint, dental reconstruction or other prosthesis. These items cannot be cremated and are removed from the body. Any of these items will be returned if a request is made at the time of the body donation (before we begin our studies).

Following cremation, we will return the cremains to the next-of-kin or to a designated funeral director. If preferred, we can inter the cremains in our communal cemetery plot in Hanover.

### **Autopsy Reports**

We do not perform autopsies. An autopsy is a procedure to study disease, and our studies usually involve normal anatomic structures.

We are unable to provide any medical report on a body donor.

### **Notification procedure at the time of death**

We should be informed immediately after the time of death. We will ask a few questions about the cause of death and about the condition of the body. If we accept the donation, we will make the arrangements to remove and transport the body to Hanover. If a funeral director is called before we are notified of the donor's death, expenses may be incurred for which we will not pay.

Notification of death is made by calling:

Weekdays 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM — Anatomical Gifts Program Office (603) 650-1636

Nights, weekends, and holidays — Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (603) 650-5000 — Indicate you are calling about a potential body donor's death. The appropriate staff will be contacted.

### **Gifts in Memoriam**

We welcome monetary contributions made in memory of our donors. Gifts will be used to support the scientific and educational missions of the Department of Anatomy.

Please consider asking your family to state in your obituary notice that gifts (in lieu of flowers) may be made to the Anatomical Gifts Program. Geisel is a not-for-profit educational institution, and contributions may be tax deductible.

Please send donations to:  
Anatomical Gifts Program  
Department of Anatomy  
Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth  
Hanover, NH 03755-3832

# The UVM College of Medicine: Anatomical Gift Program FAQs

802-656-4605

email: [AGP@med.uvm.edu](mailto:AGP@med.uvm.edu)

[www.uvm.edu/medicine/mededucation/pdf/AGP-FAQ.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/mededucation/pdf/AGP-FAQ.pdf)

## 1. What are the uses of an anatomical gift at the University of Vermont?

- The UVM Anatomical Gift Program is a whole-body donation program that allows medical and graduate students, health care professionals, and clinical specialists at the University of Vermont and Fletcher Allen Health Care to study the structure of the human body, conduct anatomical reviews, and develop new clinical procedures.
- A majority of donations are studied during the Human Structure and Function course for first-year students in the College of Medicine, and in the Gross Anatomy course for first-year students studying towards their doctorate in Physical Therapy. Some donations will also be used in advanced anatomy courses for medical students, resident training, clinical training, and research.

## 2. Who can donate?

- The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act, adopted by the Vermont State Legislature in 1970, permits people at least 18 years of age or older to legally donate their remains to medical institutions for the advancement of medical science. The University of Vermont registration materials are to be completed in the presence of 2 witnesses and then submitted to this department to finalize the registration. We require that the donor be legally competent to sign for him/herself. There is no upper age limit for registration or donation to the Anatomical Gift Program.
- The Anatomical Gift Program at the University of Vermont College of Medicine will not accept donations from individuals who have not pre-registered with our program.

## 3. How can I enroll in the Anatomical Gift Program at the University of Vermont?

- Registration forms will be sent upon request. Those wishing to register as a whole-body donor should contact Lynn Bateman at (802) 656-4605 or [Lynn.Bateman@uvm.edu](mailto:Lynn.Bateman@uvm.edu) to request registration materials. All paperwork must be completed and on file in our office to facilitate acceptance of a donation. We advise prospective donors to discuss their decision with appropriate family members/ executors.

## 4. Can I donate my body to the Anatomical Gift Program and also be an organ donor?

- No, with the exception of eye donation. In general, being an organ donor precludes one from making an anatomical gift for medical education. Eye donation is compatible with body donation, and must be completed prior to arrival to UVM after the time of death.

## 5. How long will my body remain at the University of Vermont?

- In general, donations remain at the University of Vermont for a period of 2-3 years. A donor may choose to allow the University to maintain the body for special preparations for a longer period of time, as indicated in the Special Use Form of our registration packet.

## 6. What will become of the remains after studies are complete?

- There are two options for final disposition after studies have been completed. Cremated remains can be returned to a designated Recipient for final disposition, or can be held at UVM for interment in UVM burial plot.
- This decision is made at the time of registration, and may be changed at any time by contacting our office and updating your paperwork.
- Our registration packet also includes a form for special uses. Each donor has the option to choose: 1) If special preparations may be maintained by UVM for longer than the standard 2-3 year period (while the remains will be returned within 3 years, these preparations will not be cremated nor returned with the body), 2) if UVM may maintain the body for longer than their typical 2-3 year period, and return remains at the time studies are complete, and 3) if the donor or special preparation may be sent to another institution for studies.

## **7. What is the cost of making an anatomical gift donation?**

- The College of Medicine assumes the cost of transportation and related fees to our facility within the State of Vermont. The cost of transportation from out of state to the Vermont border will be the responsibility of the donor's estate or other designee. The University bears the considerable expense of this program as part of its teaching and research responsibilities, but we are profoundly grateful to those who have assumed the transportation costs as a contribution to our program for medical education.
- Although transportation costs as noted will be the responsibility of the College of Medicine, all arrangements are the responsibility of the donor or his/her designee. We also assume all responsibility for cremation of the remains following completion of the studies and return of the ashes to a designated recipient, if desired.
- The remains are cremated (at University expense) by the cremation service. Ashes can be interred in the UVM burial plot at the expense of the University, or can be sent to an individual or funeral home that has been designated to receive the ashes.

## **8. Will I automatically be accepted once I am registered with the Anatomical Gift Program?**

- No, however most donors registered in our whole-body donation program can be accepted. There is often concern that having had organs removed due to previous surgical procedures will prohibit an individual from becoming a donor, but this is rarely the case. The University of Vermont College of Medicine reserves the right to decline any donation. The most common reasons that donation may be declined include (but are not limited to):
  - An autopsy or recent surgery has been performed.
  - Organs (with the exception of eyes) have been removed after death.
  - There has been severe physical trauma or multiple amputations.
  - There is a history of a serious communicable disease, including (but not limited to): HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, meningitis, tuberculosis, or antibiotic-resistant microorganisms.
  - Sepsis/infection is present and the microorganism has not been identified nor tested for antibiotic resistance.
  - The donor is extremely obese or severely emaciated.
  - More than 48-60 hours will have elapsed from time of death to arrival at our facility.
  - The University is officially closed (such as for holidays and storm closures), or our staff/facilities are unavailable.
  - Our facility is full.
- We strongly encourage every donor to discuss the details of this bequest with those who may be involved and to provide them with copies of our information letter, as well as written instructions pertaining to their arrangements.
- In rare instances, a received donation will be deemed unsuitable for adequate anatomical preservation or study. Factors contributing to such could include the presence of decayed tissue, open or recent wounds, an abundance of fatty tissue, extensive deformities, or the unlikely event that our facility has reached full capacity. In such cases the University will arrange for cremation as soon as possible, with the ashes being returned to the designated recipient.

## **9. Can I change my mind once I have registered with the Anatomical Gift Program?**

- Yes. You can withdraw from the program at any time by contacting our office and completing paperwork to be removed from the registered donor list. It is recommended that you share this with those involved in your initial registration.

## **10. What will happen at the time of death?**

- Before bringing a body to UVM, the funeral home or cremation service that will be handling the transportation is to telephone (802) 656-4605. The "on call" representative from our Anatomical Gift Program will return this call to confirm eligibility of the bequest. Our staff will need to review the information listed on the Death Certificate and medical Preliminary Report of Death (PROD) before authorizing transportation.
- If accepted, the "on call" representative will arrange to meet with the funeral home or cremation service representative at UVM to receive the body.
- Although funeral directors may know about the Anatomical Gift Program it is suggested that you direct any questions regarding the UVM Anatomical Gift Program to Lynn Bateman at (802) 656-4605.

**11. Will UVM provide my family with a report on findings during the studies?**

- No. The faculty and students involved in the studies are not qualified to provide a report on findings during studies.

**12. What happens when studies are complete?**

- Shortly before completion of the anatomical studies, the designated Recipient will be contacted to verify the instructions. If the cremated remains are to be returned to an individual or funeral home, they should be aware that it may be 2-3 years from the time of the donor's arrival at our facility before the studies are completed and the ashes returned. When UVM has been selected as the designated Recipient, the College of Medicine assumes all responsibility and costs for interment of the ashes in our burial plot in Burlington.

**13. Can my family members contact UVM to check on the status of studies?**

- Yes. Family members can feel free to contact the Anatomical Gift Program if they would like information on when studies will likely be complete, but should be made aware that it will likely be 2-3 years from the time of the donation.

**14. What happens if I am outside of Vermont at the time of death?**

- The College of Medicine assumes the cost of transportation and related fees to our facility within the State of Vermont. The cost of transportation from out of state to the Vermont border will be the responsibility of the donor's estate or other designee. A body must be received within 48 hours of the time of death.
- If you frequently travel to or live in another region for part of the year, we strongly encourage you to also register with Anatomical Gift Programs in that region.