



# FAQS ABOUT THE BODY DONOR PROGRAM

## Q: What is the procedure for body donation?

**A:** Fill out two copies of the authorization form provided by the Department of Neurobiology at the University of Utah School of Medicine. One copy should be returned to the Department of Neurobiology and one should be kept with the donor's personal papers. You can obtain an authorization form by calling the Department Office at (801) 581-6728, [emailing the program](#), or completing the online form found [here](#) (a wallet card will be mailed to you upon receipt of your authorization form).

Once you have submitted the authorization form and received the wallet card, provided by the Department of Neurobiology, you must sign and carry it with you in case of accidental death. Inform your family of your plans. Your wish to donate your body can also be included in your will.

## Q: What is the law in Utah concerning body donation?

**A:** Utah state gives an individual the legal authority to bequeath his or her body to the University of Utah School of Medicine if they are over 18 or married. According to the law, the wishes of

potential donors take precedence over those of their next-of-kin. However, in practice, the next-of-kin can prevent body donation if they oppose it. Therefore, it is important that the next-of-kin understand and agree with the donor's wishes.

**Q: Can a person sell his or her body?**

**A:** No. Federal law prohibits payment for body donations.

**Q: Can I donate someone else's body, such as my spouse's?**

**A:** Yes. When a husband or wife dies, the surviving spouse can donate the body.

**Q: Will the Department of Neurobiology accept all bodies?**

**A:** No. Some circumstances, such as major recent surgery, traumatic accident, autopsy, ascites, edema, obesity, contagious disease, jaundice, or organ donation other than skin and eyes, may render the body tissues useless for study. The Department of Neurobiology should still be notified at the time of death, as the severity of the condition will be a factor in determining whether the body can be accepted. Infants and small children cannot be accepted.

**Q: Can I donate my body and still have a funeral?**

**A:** Yes, if the donor or the family wants a funeral; however, they must pay the expenses. They should ask the mortician to consult with the Department of Neurobiology before the body is prepared.

**Q: Will I incur expenses when I donate my body?**

**A:** The School of Medicine will pick up the bodies within a 100-miles radius of Salt Lake City at no expense to the family. When the death of a donor occurs outside that area, however, the family or estate is responsible for additional transportation expense. When death occurs outside the state, the family will also be responsible for funeral home expense.

**Q: If I move away from the Utah area or die out state, what happens to my donation?**

**A:** The University of Utah Department of Neurobiology will still accept body donations under such circumstances, provided that the family will pay the transportation expense. If you move and wish to transfer your donation to a medical school in your new area, we will be happy to assist you.

**Q: What happens to the body after the medical studies are complete? (Donation generally lasts three months to two years.)**

**A:** At no expense to the family, the body is cremated and, in accordance with the donor's wishes, the ashes are either returned to the family or placed in a common repository at the Salt Lake City Cemetery.

**Q: What instructions should I leave my survivors about how to proceed with my body donation at the time of my death?**

**A:** Your physician or the next-of-kin should notify the Department of Neurobiology at the University of Utah School of Medicine, where we will arrange to pick up the body. If it is necessary for you to employ the services of a mortician (if the death occurs some distance from Salt Lake City), your survivors should notify the mortician and make your wishes known to him or her. They can then contact the Department of Neurobiology and work out the arrangements with them.

**Q: Must I notify an attorney to donate my body to medical science?**

**A:** No. This type of gift does not have to be written into your will, although it is permissible to do so.

## Thank You

**Thank you for considering the bequest of your remains to the Body Donor Program.**

Your anatomic gift will train present and future health care professionals, and provide access to vital anatomic material needed by scientists pursuing remedies for a wide range of human maladies.

The Department of Neurobiology is committed to improving the quality of life through cutting edge biomedical research and education. Major discoveries in the department have already led to a deeper understanding of how embryos normally develop and what events underlie serious birth defects including congenital heart defects, deafness disorders, and vision abnormalities. There is also active investigation of how the nervous system is formed, ways to enhance regeneration and regrowth in damaged brains and spinal cords, as well as how the nervous system declines with aging. The department's educational missions include teaching sciences to medical students and neurosciences to graduate students.

## Monetary Donations

Monetary donations in any amount are gratefully accepted to further our missions, advance research discoveries, and train the next generation of scientists and physicians (body preparation and disposition fees cost us over \$1,000 per body). Receipts for charitable financial contributions will be issued by the university to substantiate your gift.

[Give Now](#)

## Contact Us

For questions about body donation  
please call, email, or write to:

Heath Holverson  
520 Wakara Way  
SLC, Utah 84112  
801-581-6728

**Email:** [bodydonor@lists.utah.edu](mailto:bodydonor@lists.utah.edu)

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### School of Medicine

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Utah Women in Neuroscience

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Office of Academic Culture and Community

SOM Research



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