

Frequently Asked Questions about the UC Anatomical Donation Program

Please keep this page for your records or to share with your family members

Q: What is the purpose of the UC Anatomical Donation Program (program)?

The program was established to provide human remains for scientific studies essential to education and research.

Q: How does the registration process work?

Upon receipt of the completed documents, the program will review and notify you regarding your request to become a registered donor and upon acceptance, an identification card will be sent to you. This card will have a phone number to call at the time of death. Your loved ones, physician and/or care facility, should be notified of your wishes and informed of the contact procedure.

Q: Who can donate a body?

Any adult (18 years and older) can register with our program prior to death. If a person has died and is not registered with the program, the person appointed as power of attorney for healthcare or the decedent's surviving spouse/registered domestic partner/legally responsible person may be able to sign the necessary forms.

Q: Are there reasons a body would not be accepted?

The University reserves the right to refuse a donation for any reason including medical or pathological reasons or in the rare event that anatomical and research needs have been met. While this is an uncommon occurrence, it is important that the donor be aware of this possibility and have alternate arrangements in mind. Any condition that extensively destroys or distorts the normal anatomy of the body can make it difficult to conduct meaningful study. If any of the following situations, conditions or diseases are encountered please call the program for clarification.

These diseases, if known, **will** result in a refusal:

- Hepatitis B or C (even with treatment)
- Active Tuberculosis
- Creutzfeldt-Jakob's disease
- HIV/AIDS
- Kuru

The following reasons **may** result in refusal to accept; decisions can only be made at the time of death:

- Trauma or autopsy
- Untreated MRSA/VRSA
- Extreme emaciation or Obesity
- Suicide or other suspicious deaths
- Mortuary preparations
- Recent extensive surgery
- Advanced muscular atrophy
- Deaths reported after 48 hours

Q: What if I choose physician assisted death?

Documented physician assisted deaths **will not** result in refusal at the time of death.

Q: What happens if your program cannot accept a donation?

If our program is unable to accept for almost any non-medically related reason, we will make every attempt to transfer the donation to another location within the UC System. These reasons may include the rare occasion where our program is at capacity, significant need at another location, etc. If a donation is not accepted due to infectious disease (for example Hepatitis B) we would not be able to refer the donation elsewhere.

Q: How does the body get to the program?

At the time of death, please call the 24-hour death notification phone number located on the donor card. Our answering service will ask a few questions for verification purposes and to determine eligibility for donation at the time of death. If the family is ready, we will go ahead and dispatch our transport service to take the donor into our care.

Q: What happens after the studies are completed?

After studies are completed, the remains are cremated or bio-cremated and scattered or interred in a manner consistent with state law. The program incurs responsibility for all preparation, cremation and disposition expenses.

Q: Can my family have my cremated remains returned to them?

No, due to the undetermined length of time and how the body may be used for study, remains cannot be returned to the donor's family.

Q: How does my survivor get a copy of the death certificate?

The program will have an original certificate of death filed with the county in which the death occurs, in compliance with the registrar of Births and Deaths. The donor's responsible party must obtain copies of the certificate of death. The program will provide the contact information for the local Registrar.

Q: What happens if I change my mind?

Withdrawal from the program can be done at any time in writing.

Mail to:
UC Davis Body Donation Program
4500 2nd Ave, Suite 5502
Sacramento, CA 95817

Q: How do I update the program if I move, if my information changes or I need a new card?

Call the donor program location and request an "Update Packet" and/or a new card. It is important to keep your information current because it is used to file the death certificate so it is imperative that we have the most up to date and accurate information.

Q: What if the death occurs in another state?

The program can provide information on programs in other states and will work with survivors to accomplish the wishes of the donor.

Q: Is any payment received for a donation?

No, this is the policy of the University of California.

If you have any additional questions, please call the program at (916) 734-9560