

A Lasting Gift to Medical Science

Information and Procedures for Persons
Interested In Donating their Bodies for the
Advancement of Medical Education and
Research



INTRODUCTION

A Lasting Gift to Medical Science and Teaching

The Department of Medical Neuroscience within the Faculty of Medicine of Dalhousie University maintains a human body donation program. The main use of the donated human remains is in the teaching of normal human anatomy to Medical, Dental, Health Professionals and Life Sciences students. In addition, the donated human remains may also be used for research purposes, including but not limited to research on the anatomy and function of bones, muscles, the nervous system and other tissues. (Please see section on Teaching and Research Procedures). The Department of Medical Neuroscience provides the necessary instruction to enable students to gain the requisite knowledge of human anatomy. The use of donated human remains is an essential part of the curriculum.

It is important to note that the Department of Medical Neuroscience is a teaching institution and is not at all involved in determining the cause of death or in investigating any issues related to the pathology associated with any of the individuals whose bodies are donated to the Department.

TEACHING AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Medical Photographs

Photographs may be taken by members of the University to document the total body and specific external and internal features of the deceased, but only with written pre-approval and authorization of the Department head in keeping with established policy. These photographs will be used only for medical education and/or medical research purposes. If photographs are used for medical teaching and research purposes, the deceased's name will not be revealed.

Genetic Information

Samples of a specimen of blood or appropriate tissues may be taken for genetic testing, such as examination of chromosomes or DNA, or biochemical study.

Removal, Retention and Disposition of Tissue and/or Organ Samples

Tissue and organ samples are normally removed from the body and examined. Tissue and/or organ samples must be treated by special fixative or preservative solutions and retained for a period of time. This retention is important in order to obtain as much educational value and research-related information as possible. Organs temporarily removed for anatomical examination are returned to the body.

Tissue and organ samples may be retained, without limit of time, in a respectful manner in the Department of Medical Neuroscience, for future medical education and research purposes until the respectful disposition of the tissue by the University.

HOW TO ARRANGE THE DONATION OF YOUR BODY

Many people who intend to donate their bodies to Medical Science quite naturally think of including a statement in their will to that effect. You may of course do this, but in addition it is necessary for you to **complete the donation and permission to cremate forms**. Please note that a "witness" on the forms can be a family member, etc. The completed forms must be returned to: **Human Body Donation Program, Department of Medical Neuroscience, Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building, Rm.13-B1, 5850 College Street, PO Box 15000 Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS B3H 4R2**. A copy of your completed forms will be sent to you. **It is recommended that you provide copies of your forms to your next-of-kin and your family doctor.**

The Department of Medical Neuroscience at Dalhousie University is authorized to accept the donation of human remains from the Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island under the legislation contained in the Anatomy Acts and the Human Tissue Gift Acts of those Provinces.

Please Note: None of the documents which you complete and sign in connection with this donation program is considered to be legally binding prior to death. No legal consultation is necessary and at any time prior to death, should you change your mind concerning your intention to donate, your forms will be removed from the Department files upon request. The Department **always considers the wishes of the living** and is unlikely to accept the donation of a body where disagreement concerning the course of action exists among close relatives of the donor. **You are strongly advised to discuss your intention to donate with your immediate family members.**

STEPS TO BE COMPLETED AT THE TIME OF THE DONOR'S DEATH

- 1. If Death occurs in a Healthcare Institution:** The attending physician or healthcare provider should contact the Inspector of Anatomy as quickly as possible. It is important that the contact be made by someone who has clinical knowledge of the deceased.
- 2. If Death occurs at Home:** Contact should be made to the family physician or attending physician as soon as possible. The physician **MUST** contact the Inspector of Anatomy as soon as possible, at which time further instructions will be given.

INSPECTOR OF ANATOMY

For New Brunswick

Telephone: 506-643-6848 (24hrs)
NB Organ and Tissue Program
130 Bayard Drive
Saint John, NB, E2L 3L6

For Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island

Dr. Jeff Scott
Department of Health
PO Box 488, 5th Floor, Barrington Tower
1894 Barrington St.
Halifax, NS, B3J 2R8
Telephone: 902-424-0453 (daytime)
QEII locating 902-473-2222 (24hrs)

ACCEPTANCE OF A DONATION BY THE INSPECTOR OF ANATOMY (IOA)

If the donation is accepted, transportation of the body from the place of death to the Department of Medical Neuroscience will be made by the IOA.

Please note: Should death occur at home or a facility that does not have proper means to store the remains, or if circumstances do not allow for immediate pick up, **occasionally** remains are transferred to a funeral home to await pickup by the University's removal service. If this should happen, these funeral home costs will be the responsibility of the family or estate and **not** the University. In these circumstances, the University will cover the cost of transportation to the University from the funeral home.

Unfortunately, viewing of the remains at the Department of Medical Neuroscience cannot be permitted.

The following information is mailed to the designated next-of-kin to be completed and returned to the office of the IOA.

1. Form letter and Interim Death Certificate for immediate use, as the official death certificate is not available from Vital Statistics until four to six weeks after the date of death of the donor
2. Donor's personal information form
3. Permission to cremate form
4. Permission to publish name in memorial and/or interment booklet

REFUSAL OF A DONATION BY THE INSPECTOR OF ANATOMY (IOA)

The University recognizes the generous intentions of those who bequeath their bodies to medical science. For a number of reasons, it is not always possible to accept a donation. The circumstances which would cause a donation to be refused are complex. Any final decision about the acceptance of a body cannot be made until the time of death. **It is strongly recommended that potential donors make alternative arrangements for cremation or burial should the body NOT BE accepted by the University.**

If the donation cannot be accepted, the University **will NOT BE** responsible in any way for the arrangements or expenses connected with interment requirements.

FINAL DISPOSITION OF DONATED REMAINS

It should be noted that there must be a lapse of time, typically between one and three years, between death and the final disposition of the remains. In some instances certain tissue may be preserved for longer periods, using various methods, for continued study. (Please see section “Teaching and Research Procedures”)

Cremation – It is the policy of the Department to encourage cremation of the remains. There are three options for the final disposition of the cremated ashes. These are also listed on the enclosed “Permission to Cremate” form.

Option # 1

- CREMATION WITH INTERMENT OF ASHES IN THE DALHOUSIE MEMORIAL GARDENS

Option # 2

- CREMATION WITH THE ASHES BEING SHIPPED (VIA REGISTERED MAIL) TO: NAME and ADDRESS:

Option # 3

- CREMATION WITH THE ASHES TO BE PICKED UP BY: NAME and ADDRESS:

If option **1**) is chosen, the University will bear all expenses. If options **2**) or **3**) are chosen, the University will arrange and meet the cost of cremation and shipment of ashes (usually by registered mail). **THE FAMILY OR ESTATE WILL BE REQUIRED TO BEAR THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ARRANGEMENTS AND COSTS CONNECTED WITH THE INTERMENT OF THE ASHES.**

Burial – Should the donor or family have a strong preference for burial rather than cremation, the person acting on behalf of the deceased must make these wishes known to the Department of Medical Neuroscience in writing as soon as possible following death so that arrangements can be made for this. **If this preference is not made known, cremation will be carried out after studies are completed.**

In the case of a family burial in a private cemetery, all expenses and arrangements **will be** the responsibility of the donor’s estate.

Transportation of the remains from the Department of Medical Neuroscience to the burial destination must be performed by a funeral service. In the case of burial of the body rather than cremation, all expenses incurred will be the responsibility of the donor's estate. The University will bear the costs of burial at the Dalhousie Memorial Gardens.

UNIVERSITY MEMORIAL AND INTERMENT SERVICES

The University Memorial and Interment services are held annually for the families and friends of donors whose remains are released from the University that year.

The Memorial service is held annually for all families of the donors that are notified of the release. The Department will notify the named next-of-kin / legal executor in writing when the remains are to be released from the University. This will be done well in advance of the services.

The Interment Service is held annually for the families of the donors who have chosen interment at the Dalhousie Memorial Gardens. This service takes place at the Dalhousie Memorial Gardens located in the non-denominational Pleasant Hill Estates in Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia.

Officials of the University, faculty, staff and students attend both services which are arranged and paid for by the University. Due to the perpetual care requirements at Pleasant Hill Estates and certain provisions contained in the Human Tissue Gift Act of Nova Scotia, the University cannot make provisions for special arrangements such as the placing of individual markers for remains interred in Dalhousie Memorial Gardens; however, flowers may be placed at the grave site. The site is marked by a new (2010) large upright black granite monument containing two flower vases that replaced the former bronze memorial plaque. The monument contains the following inscription:

"Here lie the mortal remains of those who donated their bodies to the furtherance of medical sciences at Dalhousie University. Beyond the sphere of earthly life, they have given themselves for the good of others."

DONATIONS OF TISSUES AND ORGANS

The Department **does not become involved** in the donation of organs or tissues for transplant purposes. Organ and Tissue Donation is completely separate from the Human Body Donation Program. Persons interested in making such donations are advised to contact:

NB Organ and Tissue Program
130 Bayard Drive
Saint John, NB, E2L 3L6
Telephone: 506-643-6848 (24hrs)

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR REFUSAL OF A DONATION

Refusal of a donation is subject to the discretion of the Inspector of Anatomy and the Department of Medical Neuroscience at the time of death.

NOTE: There is no maximum age restriction for the acceptance of donations to medical science; however, the Department will not accept donations of bodies of persons under the age of 16.

Donations in memory of a donor to the Department of Medical Neuroscience are gratefully accepted. If you are interested in making a donation, please make a cheque or a money order payable to Dalhousie University, Department of Medical Neuroscience. The mailing address is:

Human Body Donation Program
Department of Medical Neuroscience
Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building, Rm. 13-B1
5850 College Street, PO Box 15000
Dalhousie University
Halifax, NS B3H 4R2

REMINDER TO DONORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Please inform the Department of Medical Neuroscience at Dalhousie University (telephone **Brenda Armstrong at 902-494-6850**, or in writing) of any revisions to your completed "Donation" and "Permission to Cremate" forms (i.e., address change, name change, change in next-of-kin / legal executor or change of venue for the final disposition of your remains). **Please note: Should there be a change in the next-of-kin / legal executor, a new "Permission to Cremate" form must be completed and forwarded to the Department.** You may contact the Department to obtain form(s) or you may download the forms at: <http://dal.ca/bodydonation>