



Forensic Anthropology Center  
University of Tennessee  
Body Donation Program Policy



The donation of a person's body after death is a tremendous gift. We are grateful for everyone who expresses an interest in body donation. We appreciate your attention to the following.

1. Unlike medical schools, we **do not** return remains to the family. The skeletal remains are a very important component to our research and teaching program. The first donation made to our program in 1981 continues to be studied by researchers today.
2. We reserve the right to decline donations of individuals who have any form of infectious disease such as HIV, tuberculosis, hepatitis, or coronavirus of any kind (COVID-19, SARS, etc.); prion-related diseases (Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, Kuru, etc.); infections such as sepsis; or any Multi-Drug Resistant Organisms (MDRO's) including antibiotic resistant infections such as MRSA even if contracted after donation is arranged. We also reserve the right to decline a donation if our facility is at capacity. In case of denial by the University, alternate final arrangements should be discussed between the donor and their family/legal representative. The FAC is not responsible for any costs associated with alternate arrangements.
3. Registered donors who are declined for any reason who still wish to donate may do so by choosing to have their remains cremated. We have a growing collection of cremains that provides an invaluable learning resource. People choosing this option should contact us prior to making arrangements. This allows us to work with the crematory involved to ensure the cremains are not pulverized. The donor's family or their estate must assume responsibility for the arrangement and cost of cremation.
4. If you are an organ and/or tissue donor, you may still donate your body to our program. However, we do ask that you do not permit postmortem skeletal tissue (i.e. bone or bone marrow) donation.
5. We will arrange transportation to our facility if the deceased is located in a hospital, funeral home, or medical examiner's office within 100 miles of Knoxville **and** within the state of Tennessee. Outside the state of Tennessee or more than 100 miles from Knoxville, the donor and/or the donor's family must arrange for the transportation of the body to our facility and assume all responsibility for any associated costs.
6. We are unable to transport from a private residence, hospice facility, nursing home, or the like. If the deceased is in one of these locations, the donor's family or their representative must arrange for transportation to a funeral home and assume responsibility for the cost.
7. We must have signed donation documents prior to transporting.
8. Donor paperwork should be returned to the Forensic Anthropology Center at the time of completion in order for a file to be established. Changes in contact information or medical status should be communicated to us in order to keep donor files up to date.
9. Donor paperwork needs 2 witnesses to verify your signature, but does **not** need to be notarized.
10. We do not perform autopsies or determine the cause of death for donors to our program.

11. We do not accept the donation of individuals who have been embalmed.
12. Once your donation paperwork has been received and processed, you will receive an acceptance letter and a Donor Card confirming your status as a pre-registered donor with the FAC Body Donation Program. You may keep these documents in your wallet or with your important papers to help make your wishes known. Please remember that final acceptance to our program is not confirmed until after your death.

If you have any questions or concerns that have not been addressed in these policies, please feel free to contact us at (865) 974-4408 or [donateinfo@utk.edu](mailto:donateinfo@utk.edu). Our regular business hours are Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time.

For the most up-to-date information and policies, including postmortem testing requirements, please visit our website at [fac.utk.edu/body-donation/](http://fac.utk.edu/body-donation/).