

**"T**he treatment was successful because of the physician's skill." This is a simple statement, but did you ever wonder how a physician becomes so skillful? Early in their medical career the student must learn how the human body is constructed before treating live patients. This is learned by careful study of the human body; no models, films, or books can substitute the human body itself.

#### **WHY DOES EMORY NEED MY BODY?**

The bodies used at Emory Medical School are donated by generous individuals who wish to be useful to the living after death.

We all cannot endow a hospital or establish a clinic, but each of us has the opportunity to make one valuable gift to medical science - the gift of our body after death.

Below are questions asked most frequently by those considering giving their bodies to the medical school.

#### **MAY I DONATE ORGANS AND STILL DONATE MY BODY TO EMORY?**

While the Body Donor Program encourages organ donation, removal of organs and/or tissue for transplantation will make body donation impractical.

#### **WILL I BE PAID FOR LEAVING MY BODY TO EMORY?**

No. Emory does not buy bodies nor do other medical schools in the United States. Donation does relieve the family of many expenses involved in a funeral service.

#### **WILL EMORY PAY FOR TRANSPORTATION OF THE BODY?**

No. The donor's representative will be asked to pay the cost of transporting the body to Emory. The Body Donor Program will make arrangements with a transportation service to ensure the donor is safely transported to the medical school.

#### **HOW ARE BODIES USED AT EMORY?**

Many bodies are dissected by closely supervised medical students. Others are used by the medical school faculty and residents to develop new surgical techniques/ diagnostic procedures or to provide continuing education to physicians and other health professionals.

#### **IS THIS THE SAME AS AN AUTOPSY?**

No. An autopsy determines the cause of death and takes only a short time. Anatomical dissection requires detailed examination of the entire body and its component with

emphasis on *normal structure*. No reports of any kind are furnished to the donor's family.

#### **WILL MY BODY BE TREATED WITH RESPECT?**

Yes. Faculty, students, residents, and fellows in training are aware that the body from which they learn is a generous donation. No disrespect is tolerated. All use of the body is closely supervised and the identity of the body is known only to a few faculty and staff members. Bodies are NOT displayed to the public.

#### **DOES MY RELIGION APPROVE OF BODY DONATION?**

Most religions approve of body donation. If you are uncertain of your religion's position on the use of the dead body, consult your Minister, Pastor, Rabbi, or Priest.

#### **MUST MY FAMILY AGREE WITH MY WISH TO GIVE MY BODY TO EMORY?**

Emory requests consent from the next of kin before accepting a body. It is wise to consult your family so they will be emotionally prepared to carry out your wishes. They are the ones who must understand why you feel that the donation of your body is a gift to all future generations. Emory will decline a body when close family members oppose the donation.

#### **MAY MY SURVIVORS HAVE A FUNERAL FOR ME IF I DONATE MY BODY TO EMORY?**

With PROPER COORDINATION the family may have the body embalmed for viewing and/or a funeral service. Otherwise, Emory must receive the body immediately after death.

#### **IS THE BODY RETURNED TO THE FAMILY FOR BURIAL?**

No. After study the body is cremated at no expense to the family. This may take up to 24 months after death. If requested, ashes may be returned by registered U. S. Mail to the family for private disposition. There will be a nominal fee for preparation and shipping.

#### **WHAT IS DONE WITH THE ASHES IF THEY ARE NOT RETURNED?**

They will be buried at the annual memorial service in Decatur Cemetery, Decatur, Georgia in a common grave. There is no expense to the family.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS IF I DIE FAR FROM EMORY?**

Essentially, there are two options:  
(1) The body may be offered to a nearby medical school that needs bodies.

(2) The body may be buried or cremated in the usual manner at the expense of the family or estate.

#### **MAY EMORY REFUSE MY BODY AFTER DEATH?**

Yes. Emory reserves the right to decline bodies not suitable for medical study. Suitability will be determined **before** the body is transported to Emory. You should have alternate plans for disposition of your body in the event it is not accepted by the Medical School.

#### **WHO SHOULD BE NOTIFIED OF MY DEATH?**

The physician, hospital or nearest relative should immediately call the Body Donor Program at Emory University: (404) 727-6242. This number is answered twenty-four hours a day.

#### **MAY FRIENDS AND/OR RELATIVES MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROGRAM IN MY MEMORY?**

Yes. Gifts are tax-deductible and should be directed to Emory's Body Donor Program at the address below. Gifts will be acknowledged to the benefactor and to your family. Funds from such gifts will be used only for medical education.

#### **HOW MAY I LEAVE MY BODY TO EMORY?**

A simple gift form is required. You must personally sign the form and return it to Emory at least 30 days before your death. Expressing your wishes in your will is not sufficient for Emory to accept the body. Also, Emory does not accept body donations directed by the next of kin or by an individual with power of attorney, durable or otherwise. Your signature should be witnessed by two (2) individuals who are not family members. Your nearest relatives should also personally sign the form. Return one copy of the form to Emory. After Emory receives the properly completed form, you will be sent a wallet card identifying you as a Body Donor. You may obtain the forms by calling, visiting our web page, or by writing:

(404) 727-6242 Main Office

<https://med.emory.edu/departments/cell-biology/education/body-donor-program.html>

Send the form to:

Emory University School of Medicine  
Body Donor Program  
100 Woodruff Circle  
Atlanta, GA 30322