

# Let's Talk About Body Donation

When a person dies, the first question is, what will happen to their body? Cremation and burial are often the first options that come to mind, but many choose to donate their body to medical and scientific research. Here are some things to know about body donation:

## What is body donation?

After death, a person's body is transported to a body donation organization that works with medical and scientific professionals to utilize the body for research and training purposes. The agency then cares for the person's cremation and returns the cremated remains to the family.

## What is the difference between body donation and organ donation?

With body donation, a person's body is donated to scientific research and training. In the case of organ donation, organs and/or tissues are donated for transplant into either one or more people.

## Can I do both (organ and body donation)?

A person can be registered as both an organ donor and a body donor. In this case, donation of live organs (heart, liver, etc.) would take priority over the body donation. If organs are not viable, the body would then go to the body donation agency. If organ and tissue donation (except eyes) takes place, the body is then usually not eligible for body donation.

## Can the body be disqualified from donation?

Yes. Every donation agency has guidelines for acceptance of a body. Some reasons a person may not be eligible include: communicable diseases such as HIV or Hepatitis, traumatic death, weight, or others.

## Do I have to pre-register to donate my body?

No. While it is helpful to be pre-registered with a body donation organization, most can complete registration and approval after death.

## Can there still be a memorial or funeral service?

Yes. The family can have a memorial service without the body present, or they can choose to wait until the cremated remains have been returned. There cannot, however, be a service with the body present and the body may not be embalmed.

## Does the family pay anything for body donation?

Most organizations cover the cost of cremation. However, in some cases the family may incur fees for the transportation, death certificates, or other services provided by the funeral home.

## Can family view the body?

If the body is transported through a funeral home or mortuary, there may be an opportunity for a brief viewing of the body. However, this is not possible in all circumstances or with an organization that transports directly from the place of death to their facility.

## Does the family work with a funeral home?

In some cases, a funeral home will coordinate transportation to the donation facility and support the family through other details such as the death certificate and services. In others, the family works directly with the donation organization without the support of a funeral home.

## What happens to the body after donation?

With the Anatomical Board, the body is preserved and used in a classroom setting (the body becomes a medical cadaver). In other cases, tissue and body parts may be separated from the body and used for research or training in multiple locations.

What happens at the time of death?  
 The medical professional or the family should call the body donation organization for instructions. Some organizations involve a mortuary at that time and others transport the body directly to their facility.



## How do I make my disposition preferences known?

### The Colorado Declaration of Last Remains

The Colorado Declaration of Disposition of Last Remains allows and empowers individuals to make their wishes for arrangements after death formally known. It was created to protect a person's right to direct their disposition and to prevent outside parties trying to impose their own wishes. The first section declares preference for burial, cremation, entombment, or other options. The second allows a person to designate the type of ceremonial arrangements requested. Once filled out, it is very important that the document is shared with your chosen funeral home, your medical power of attorney, and financial power of attorney.

Body Donation Organization	Pre-registration required?	Covers some or all cost	Time frame to receive ashes?	Is the body kept intact?	Is a local funeral home involved?	Out-of-State donation available
MedCure	No	Yes	8-12 weeks	No	Yes	Yes
Lonetree Medical	No	Yes	8 weeks	No	No	No*
State Anatomical Board	No	Yes	2 years	Yes	Sometimes	No*
Science Care	No	Yes	3-5 weeks	No	No	Yes

\*Body donors from Wyoming are typically accepted.

For more answers to your questions or to get started with registration, contact a donor organization directly:

**MedCure**  
[www.medcure.org](http://www.medcure.org)  
 Phone: 1-866-560-2525  
 Email:  
[info@medcure.org](mailto:info@medcure.org)

**State Anatomical Board**  
[www.ucdenver.edu](http://www.ucdenver.edu)  
 (search for anatomical board)  
 Phone: 303-724-2410

**Science Care**  
[www.sciencecare.com](http://www.sciencecare.com)  
 Phone: 1-800-417-3747  
 Email:  
[info@sciencecare.com](mailto:info@sciencecare.com)

**Lonetree Medical Donation**  
[www.lonetreemedical.com](http://www.lonetreemedical.com)  
 Phone: 720-515-9215

