

BRAIN DONATION FACT SHEET

MEMORY & AGING PROJECT (MAP), WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

YOUR GIFT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

We now know more about Alzheimer disease than ever before. This is in large part due to the dedication of research volunteers and the gift of brain donation for autopsy. A brain autopsy confirms a diagnosis of Alzheimer disease (AD) and identifies clues about other diseases that may be present in brain tissue. Information from the autopsy helps researchers better understand Alzheimer Disease and find a cure to help future generations.

Who Can Donate?

Only people who have participated in Memory and Aging Project (MAP) research may donate. If you wish to donate your brain, it is important for your family members to know your wishes and be part of the decision-making process.

How is Donation Done?

We ask that your family notify MAP as soon as possible after death. Your body will be taken St. Louis Cremation where the brain is removed in such a way that your facial appearance is not changed or harmed. After donating, you can still have an open casket funeral, if you choose.

Does it Cost Anything?

Brain donation is free and MAP pays transportation costs to bring the donor to St. Louis Cremation for the procedure. Once complete, your chosen funeral home will transport the donor's body from St. Louis Cremation and begin the funeral arrangements in keeping with the donor's wishes. Transport from St. Louis Cremation is part of routine funeral expenses covered by the family.

How Do I Make Sure My Family Knows About My Gift?

We will provide you with the materials you need to discuss your choice with your loved ones. Most participants find that their families understand the choice to donate and are supportive of the idea. It is especially important to share your choice with the person who will manage your funeral affairs. This includes making sure they know what number and when to call the Memory and Aging Project.

Who Can Give Permission?

According to Missouri law, you may give consent for brain donation anytime during your lifetime. After death, your closest living relative or Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) can consent to brain donation.

Will My Family Receive Feedback?

Yes. Your family will receive a report that includes an explanation of any brain diseases evident upon autopsy. They will receive a personal phone call explaining these results and a written report.

FACTS:

A brain autopsy confirms a diagnosis of Alzheimer disease. Information from the autopsy is helpful to researchers working to better understand Alzheimer disease and find a cure to help future generations.

Donating is your choice and you can decline for any reason. It is a good idea to talk with your family and friends before finalizing your decision. Your decision can be changed at any time.



Lawson Calhoun

TESTIMONIALS:

“My mom was a very giving person and once she learned of the need of your study and brain donations, it inspired her to contribute to both. She spoke to each of her children about her decision early on to prepare us and make her wishes known. The process was very smooth. I thought it was very generous for her to make this decision.”

—Gayle Poynter, daughter of a Memory and Aging Project volunteer

“When asked about brain donation, I had to think (about it) a little bit. I was given some information, and I did a little research to learn more. I talked to the staff (at the Memory and Aging Project) and asked questions. The choice to donate my brain feels like a continuation of the commitment I made, and I want to aid the development of more information. I shared my decision with my wife and daughter and they are supportive. Hopefully very soon researchers can eliminate the disease or prevent people from getting Alzheimer’s.”

—Lawson Calhoun, Memory and Aging Project volunteer

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

If you have further questions, contact the Memory and Aging Project at (314) 286-2683.