DONATING YOUR BODY FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Thanks to these precious gifts, students in university health and science programs can receive a practical education in human anatomy as well as practice different skills necessary for their subjects of specialty.

Body donation is also essential to the development of new techniques and approaches in health care or surgical intervention.

WHO BENEFITS FROM BODY DONATION?

Students and professionals in diverse disciplines in the health field are able to receive a practical education:

- Medical students receive a comprehensive education in the human body through various university courses in which they may perform dissections.
- Medical residents in various university programs can practice different surgical methods necessary for a surgical specialty as well as other specialties such as anesthesiology, neurology, radiology, and emergency medicine.
- University students in many different health science programs may take human anatomy courses during their studies.
- Medical specialist and healthcare professionals can develop new techniques and approaches in the field of research or in teaching seminars.

IS THERE AN AGE LIMIT FOR BODY DONATION?

There is no maximum age limit for participation in the Body Donor Program, however McGill only accepts donations from individuals who are at least 18 years old.

ARE THERE COSTS RELATED TO BODY DONATION?

There is no cost to either the donor or his/her family, unless:

- the distance travelled to collect the body is greater than the parameters established by the educational institutions (McGill: 60 km, other institutions: 250 km).
- it is the wish of the family to have a religious ceremony, or to have the remains/ashes interred in a specific location, once the study is complete. In the case of private burial, the family must make the required arrangements at their own cost.

CAN A VIEWING OF THE BODY BE HELD AT THE FUNERAL HOME PRIOR TO DONATION?

Unfortunately this is not possible, since the body must be collected by an educational institution generally within the first 24 to 48 hours after death.

HOW IS IT DETERMINED WHERE THE BODIES GO?

The allocation of bodies is determined in accordance with criteria established by the educational institutions. The decision is based on factors such as available space at a particular institution, the date and location of death, criteria regarding preservation, whether or not the deceased recently underwent surgery, weight, height, and distance to one of the educational institutions. All criteria are outlined in the section below entitled “Donor Eligibility and Conditions.”

WILL THE IDENTITY OF THE DONOR BE REVEALED?

Body donation is an anonymous gesture. Personal information is recorded and transmitted by competent authorities for administrative purposes only.

Students must adhere to a code of ethics requiring the complete respect that the donors deserve. Furthermore, the name of the donor always remains anonymous.

Please be aware that images of the bodies may be used as visual aids for teaching purposes through a secure online system. The identity of the body in the images always remains anonymous.

CAN MY FAMILY AND LOVED ONES OPPOSE MY DECISION?

It is very important that you communicate your wish to donate your body to your family and loved ones and include them in your decision. Those with whom you have discussed your wishes may speak on your behalf and confirm your consent to donate upon your death.

AFTER MY DEATH, CAN A FAMILY MEMBER OR LOVED ONE DONATE MY BODY EVEN WITHOUT MY CONSENT?

Without evidence that this is contrary to the deceased’s wishes, the family may make a request of the attending health professional after the death to begin Body Donation procedures by filling out the requisite form.

MCGILL’S DONOR AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. The body must not exceed certain maximum weight limits, taking height into consideration. Please consult the Body Mass Index chart further on the next page.
2. The body must not be that of a person who had a contagious disease (e.g. Hepatitis A/B/C, AIDS, MRSA, Septicemia, Septic Shock, SARS, C-difficile, acute jaundice, etc.).
3. The body must not be embalmed or have undergone an autopsy.
4. The body must not have undergone major surgery during the two months preceding death.
5. The body must be in an acceptable state of preservation. The transport of the body to the educational institution normally must normally be carried out within 48 hours following death. This time may be reduced in periods of heat wave.
6. The body must not have been used for major organ donation (e.g. kidney, lung, liver, or heart). However, a corneal transplant (eye), for example, does not prevent a body from being accepted.
7. The body must not be that of a victim of a major burn or major accident.
8. The body has not been disfigured by disease (malformation of limbs)

BMI of:
19 to 28 is acceptable for MEN
19 to 27 is acceptable for WOMEN
MEDICAL RECORDS

If you are willing to share your medical record after your death, please speak with your executor, who should forward your medical record to McGill University once the body is accepted. The medical history is important to our research staff and students, since in certain cases it allows them to study specific physical conditions.

As in the case of the body donor, the medical record shall remain confidential, for use by authorized students and personnel only.

WHAT TO DO UPON DEATH?

IMPORTANT

It is important to keep the body donor card with you at all times (in your wallet with other forms of personal identification). Since the body must be transferred to the University within a maximum of 48 hours, it is necessary to have the card readily available so that there are no delays in the transport of the donor’s body.

In case of death at a hospital or at a health and social services institution, family members or loved ones must inform the attending healthcare professional of the deceased’s consent to body donation for teaching and research purposes. The designated official at the establishment will contact the closest University, in accordance with established protocol. Healthcare professionals are familiar with the procedure.

In case of death at home or at a seniors’ residence, family members, the attending doctor, or loved ones must contact the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux at 418.781.7620 and inform the person in charge of the Body Donation program of the death and consent to donate.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BODY AFTER THE STUDY IS COMPLETE?

The study generally lasts between one and two years. In certain cases this may be longer. The study dates follow the cycle of the academic year (September through June)--if we receive a body in mid-December, for example, the study will not begin before the following September.

Once the study is complete, the body is cremated, and the ashes are buried in the institution’s private plot at a cemetery (Mount Royal Cemetery in the case of McGill), at the cost of the institution. Some institutions, such as McGill, hold a commemorative service in memory of the donors and to which family and friends of the donors are invited. For more information, please contact the institution. McGill does not return the ashes to the family of the donor upon completion of the study and subsequent cremation. However, it is possible to request by written letter that the uncremated remains be returned upon completion of the study. All subsequent arrangements and expenses upon return of the remains will be the responsibility of the donor’s family.

F.
OR EYE DONATION

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

MONTREAL
MAISONNELLE-ROSEMONT HOSPITAL
5689, boulevard Rosemont
Montreal, QC H1T 2H1
Telephone: 514.252.3886 or 514.252.3400

QUÉBEC
CENTRE HOSPITALIER DE L’UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL
2705 Boulevard Laurier
Sainte-Foy, QC G1V 4G2
Telephone: 418.654.2702

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BODY AFTER THE STUDY IS COMPLETE?

Direction des ententes de gestion et d’imputabilité et des relations institutionnelles
Corps non réclamés et dons de corps à la science
1075 Chemin Sainte-Foy, 3rd Floor
Quebec City, Quebec G1S 2M1
E: funerarie@msss.gouv.qc.ca

DONATING YOUR BODY

FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH

The information in this pamphlet has been adapted to the rules and regulations of the body donor program as administered by McGill University.

Bodies donated to science play a crucial role in the teaching of medical and science students in our universities, as well as in a variety of important medical research studies. Teaching and research institutions such as McGill University are indebted to the generosity of individuals who choose to make this invaluable contribution to the advancement of medical research.

Through these donations, our university students in the health sciences have the opportunity to receive important lessons in human anatomy, work first-hand with the human body, and practice the many techniques that will be essential to them in their future medical and scientific practices.

I hereby donate my body for teaching and research purposes.

Donor's name (in uppercase letters)                      Date of birth (YYYY-MM-DD)
Donor's signature                                   Date of signature
Residences or specific witness, if any.
Witness
Witness

You may withdraw your consent to donate your body at any time.