

Autopsy, Brain and Body Donation and Low-Cost Funeral and Burial Options

This packet contains the following:

1. Autopsy Information:

According to the Alzheimer's Association Autopsy Assistance network, diagnosis and research are the two main reasons for doing an autopsy on an Alzheimer's patient. While the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease (AD) can now be up to 90% accurate, it can only be positively confirmed through autopsy. This provides important medical history and genetic information for families. Autopsy data also provides information about the prevalence of AD which affects the amount of funding available from the government for medical research. Brain tissue for research purposes is also important to further ongoing investigation in finding a treatment and cure. **For more information, contact the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900)**

Planning ahead helps families in making the difficult decision for autopsy; families need support and guidance in making the decision and planning for autopsy. This tip sheet provides answers to general questions about autopsy including the following:

- Why an autopsy?
- How do I get an autopsy?
- How much does it cost?
- Frequent concerns and questions

2. Brain Donation Resources:

With advance registration, an individual, or their legal representative, can choose to donate their brain to a brain bank or Alzheimer's Disease Research Center for research purposes. This resource list includes contact information for local institutions that accept brain donations.

3. Body Donation Programs:

Medical schools, research hospitals and medical device companies use donated cadavers to help train physicians and surgeons and to assist with the development of new medical products, procedures and treatments. This resource list includes local and out-state programs that accept bodies for the advancement of learning and medicine. In most cases, advance registration and planning is required. Although there may be some expenses billed to the family, body donation is another way that burial costs can be reduced because the institution cremates the remains.

4. Low-Cost Funeral and Burial Options:

Some families need assistance with funeral and burial costs after the death of their loved one. This resource list includes a few low-cost options for funerals and burial services in the St. Louis area

Autopsy and Brain Donation

Autopsy

Why an autopsy?

Diagnosis and research are the two main reasons for doing an autopsy on a person who lived with dementia. An accurate diagnosis can reduce worry for other family members concerned about their own risk and provides information about the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, which affects the amount of funding available for medical research. Brain tissue for research purposes is also important to further ongoing investigation in finding a treatment and cure.

How do I get an autopsy?

Planning ahead helps families in making the decision for autopsy. This is a family decision and discussion in advance allows all family members to participate at a time when they are not in the midst of sorrow. Planning ahead also allows the physician to act as an advocate and assist in arranging the autopsy and providing a smooth process for the autopsy to occur.

An individual may give consent for an autopsy anytime during their lifetime by signing an autopsy permit form available from the hospital or the pathologist selected for the procedure. After death, a family member or Durable Power of Attorney can consent to the autopsy. Copies of the permit should be retained by the family and provided for placement in the individual's medical record in their physician's office and the care center and/or nursing home. The permit should be signed but not dated. Discuss the plan for autopsy with the funeral director and request that the body not be embalmed before brain removal.

If the brain tissue is to be donated for research, this procedure also needs to be discussed in advance with the primary physician and pathologist selected to perform the autopsy. The family needs to sign an additional consent form stating the brain tissue is to be sent to the research center.

How much does it cost?

Costs for autopsy vary for each facility. The fees range from no charge to \$2,000 or more. Please see the list of brain banks for more information on different options and their cost.

Frequent Concerns and Questions

Is a Complete Autopsy Performed? No. In cases where Alzheimer's disease is suspected, only the brain tissue needs to be examined for diagnosis; however, you may decide to get a complete autopsy.

Where is the autopsy performed? If death occurs in a hospital, the autopsy may be performed in that facility. If death takes place in a nursing home, other arrangements will have to be made; including where the autopsy is performed and how the body is transported.

Can I have an open casket? Yes. Brain tissue removal leaves the person's face entirely untouched.

Brain Banks

Some people ask that their brains be donated to science after they die. Important knowledge about the brain and brain diseases comes from these generous donors. Any person over the age of 18 can register as a potential brain donor. Some National Institute on Aging (NIA) - funded [Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers](#) accept brain donations from research study participants. You may also consider reaching out to your local medical school.

Knight Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) Memory and Aging Project

Washington University School of Medicine
314.286.2683 or Email: adrcedu@abraxas.wustl.edu
Webpage: <http://alzheimer.wustl.edu>

Who can donate: Available for current and past participants in the Memory and Aging Project
Cost: The brain autopsy and the cost to transport the body for autopsy is free. Funeral arrangements will still have to be made. Following the removal of the brain tissue, the family is typically responsible for the cost to have the funeral home pick up the decedent's body from Barnes Jewish Hospital. If the body is out of state at the time of death, the center must coordinate retrieval of the brain tissue with the local hospital or funeral home.
How: Call the number above to begin the process.

Saint Louis University Alzheimer's Disease Brain Bank

Center for Healthy Brain Aging
314.977.4825
Webpage: <http://www.slu.edu/neurology-and-psychiatry-home/psychiatric-services/geriatric-psychiatry/brain-bank>

Who can donate: This is a community brain bank, meaning they accept tissue from everyone. It requires a pre-registration.
Cost: The brain autopsy costs \$850 at Saint Louis University Hospital. If the brain only comes from another hospital, the cost is \$520. For the latter option, the brain must be sent to: Department of Pathology, Autopsy Division.
How: Call the number above to receive the necessary registration forms.

Outside the St. Louis Chapter service area:

UMKC Neuroscience Brain Tissue Bank and Research Lab

University of MO in Kansas City
Coordinator: Laura Peck, MSW
816.512.7445

National Institute of Health NeuroBioBank

Email questions to neurobiobank@imsweb.com or call 1.800.222.2225
Go to https://neurobiobank.nih.gov/pages/donor_resources/ for a listing and location of brain banks.

Body Donation Programs

*The gift of a donated body helps students learn and understand the complexities of the body.
In most cases, body donation requires advance registration and planning by the individual and family members

National Body Donor Program

314.241.6237 or 866.382.6237

www.nationalbody.org

Cost: There may be a nominal fee for transportation and paperwork
Cremated remains can be returned to the family

Science Care

800.417.3747

www.sciencecare.com

Call at time of passing for a screening to determine eligibility. If the individual is in hospice care, the screening can be done in advance.

Cost: The following costs are covered: transportation, cremation, filing of death certificate, and return of cremated remains.

Logan Chiropractic College

636.230.1735

Email questions and requests to:

donation@logan.edu/anatomical-donor-program

Cost: Must pay for transportation to the University. No cremated remains will be returned to the family.

Department of Anatomy St. Louis University School of Medicine

314.977.8027

Email questions and requests to:

humiston@slu.edu

Cost: Must pay for transportation to the University. No cremated remains will be returned to the family.

Washington University School of Medicine Department of Anatomy & Neurobiology ATTN: Body Donation Program

314.362-3597 or 1.855.502.7894 (toll free)

<http://thalamus.wustl.edu>

Cost: There is no cost to donate the body however, funeral directors and transporters charge for the services they provide. Cremated remains are not returned to the family.

Outside the Greater Missouri Chapter Service Area:

Illinois:

Anatomical Gift Association of Illinois

phone: 312.733.5283 fax: 312.733.5079

www.againinois.org / agadonate1@aol.com

Cremated remains can be returned to the family

Cost: The family is responsible for the cost of transporting the body to AGA (Chicago, IL)

Southern Illinois University School of Medicine -Carbondale

618.536.5511

Missouri:

Columbia School of Medicine University of Missouri-Columbia

Department of Anatomy

573.882.2288

A.T. Still University Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine

660.626.2468

The University of Medicine and Biosciences Department of Anatomy

University Hospital –Kansas City, MO

816.283.2000

800.234.4847

University of Missouri School of Dentistry & Kansas City School of Medicine

Department of Anatomy

816.234.0484

Low-Cost Funeral and Burial Options (call for current rates)

Alternative Funeral and Cremation Services

2115 Parkway Drive
St. Peters, MO 63376
636.498.5300 or 1.800.225.6125
www.alternativefuneralcremation.com
Services: Low cost cremation and burial.

American Mortuary and Cremation Services

5444 Highway 61-67
Imperial, MO 63052
314.200.2604
www.saintlouiscremationservices.com
Services: Works with DFS Memorials as a network of local, family owned and operated funeral homes and cremation providers who offer low cost end-of-life alternatives.

Bi-State Cremation and Funeral Service

3887 N. Highway 67
Florissant, MO 63033
314.831.8868
www.bistatecremationandfuneral.com
Services: Low cost cremation, removal of remains, one death certificate, completion of all necessary papers, and all services provided by funeral director. Provides services for people up to 50 miles from St. Louis.

Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of St. Louis

6901 MacKenzie Road
St. Louis, MO 63123
314.352.5300
www.archstl.org/cemeteries
Services: Family may be eligible to receive a charity grave, or charity grave and opening at a greatly reduced price if they are a parishioner at local church and have their priest call to request the services.

Cremation Society of Missouri

4175 Shady Springs Lane
St. Peters, MO 63301
636.946.9896 / www.missouricremate.com
Services: Low cost cremation. Lower cost burial options may be available.

Kriegshauser Brothers

2556 S. Brentwood Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63144
314.962.0601 / www.k-brothers.com
Services: Low overhead enables them to offer the identical, high quality services and caskets for substantially less. Low cost cremation. 24/7 availability.

Lakewood Park Cemetery

7330 Mackenzie Road
St. Louis, MO 63123
314.892.1733
Services: Low cost grave, opening, and complete service in "Garden of Memories" section for people with limited ability to pay.

St. Matthew's Cemetery

4360 Bates Street
St. Louis, MO 63116
314.481.9033 / www.stmatthewcemetery.org/
Services: Low cost burial plots.

St. Vincent de Paul Society

100 N. Jefferson
St. Louis, MO 63103
www.svdpusa.org
Services: Free burial services at Calvary Cemetery for people with no family; undertaker is usually already involved. Obtain referrals from the coroner's office or other city offices.

Veteran's Benefits

1.800.827.1000 (Veteran's Affairs Office)
www.funeralnet.com/info_guide/vet_benefits.html
Services: Free burial services, headstone and markers in a national cemetery for an honorably discharged veteran, spouse, or dependent child.