

# Give the Ultimate Gift

## Whole Body Donation. Wholehearted Thanks.

The Virginia State Anatomical Program (VSAP) thanks you for giving the ultimate, generous gift – the donation of your body or that of a loved one. The need is great, and your gift to education and research is greatly valued. Future Virginians will thank you as well.

You reap the benefits, because you

- help to further medical education and scientific research
- avoid traditional burial and cremation costs
- will ask to receive cremated remains after studies are completed

You improve the lives of all Virginians, because your donation

- helps health professionals learn more about anatomy and physiology
- may help identify causes of disease
- is instrumental in researching new treatments and cures

*Forget-me-nots*



DONATE YOUR BODY.  
LIVE ON THROUGH SCIENCE.

### Virginia State Anatomical Program

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[www.vdh.virginia.gov/stateanatomicalprogram](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/stateanatomicalprogram)

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## Donation Overview

Currently there is more demand for whole body donation than there are people willing to donate.

Whole bodies are used for education and research. No tissue is transplanted into a living person (which distinguishes whole body donation from organ donation). Physicians, EMS personnel, even dental healthcare professionals study donated bodies at five Virginia medical schools and other healthcare institutions. Often research facilities contact VSAP with special criteria for a particular study.

Some medical conditions or circumstances of death can make a body unacceptable for scientific study. These include:

- obesity/emaciation
- amputations
- unhealed open wounds
- contagious diseases

Whole body donation is not possible after an autopsy has been performed.



## VSAP Profile

**Goal:** *Provide a dignified, respectful and professional means for individuals who wish to donate their bodies to science.*



The Virginia State Anatomical Program is an agency within the Department of Health. It does not receive state funding, nor does it pay for donated bodies. VSAP distributes only the whole body, unlike some programs which provide just certain requested parts of the anatomy.

VSAP is the only organization in the Commonwealth legally authorized to accept, document, and distribute whole, donated bodies. This is an advantage for Virginia families, because in other states, various medical schools have their own separate donation programs and each operates by a different set of guidelines. Even the national whole body donation programs have widely varying standards.

## Process Explanation

- Pre-register for whole body donation by contacting VSAP.  
*This does not guarantee acceptance at the time of death, and you do not have to pre-register to be accepted.*
- Notify VSAP upon the death of a potential donor.  
*A healthcare professional or family member should make the phone call within 24 hours.*
- Make arrangements with the funeral home to place potential donor in refrigeration.  
*Required if death occurs at a private residence or healthcare facility without refrigeration.*
- VSAP staff will notify family whether or not the body is suitable for donation.  
*First, the death certificate must be issued and signed.*
- If the donated body is accepted, VSAP will make arrangements for transportation.
- The donated body is placed by VSAP based on need and availability.  
*Families can request that a specific medical school or facility receive the donated body, and their wishes will be accommodated if at all possible.*
- Cremated remains are returned to the family.  
*Studies are usually completed within two months to five years.*

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