

***University of Pennsylvania***  
***Center for Neurodegenerative Disease Research***  
***Brain Donation Program***

*Questions often asked:*

*1. Will brain donation disfigure the body?*

No. The examination is performed like a surgical procedure under the supervision of a pathologist. No procedures performed will prevent the possibility of having an open casket for the funeral. There is a minimal delay that should not interfere with the funeral preparations

*2. Does the entire body need to be examined?*

No. The examination may be limited to the brain only. This is sufficient to enable us to make a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or another type of dementia.

*3. Will brain donation delay the funeral?*

No. With the exception of unusual weather conditions or unexpected distances for transport, the examination is done as soon as we are notified of the patient's death. The procedure is completed within hours and our staff members work with funeral directors to expedite arrangements. Arrangements are best handled by the funeral director, however, we will assist in the transport if necessary.

*4. What does it cost?*

Brain autopsy is free of charge. We will provide the family with a report of the findings approximately 6 months following the death. Funeral arrangements are the responsibility of the family.

*5. What is done with the tissue after it is removed?*

The tissue is analyzed with a goal of establishing an accurate diagnosis. The definitive diagnosis of a dementia requires pathological examination of brain tissue. In addition to the diagnosis, there is research value gained from the tissue analysis to understand the causes of Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, Frontotemporal Dementia, ALS and related disorders. Understanding the processes that cause degeneration can aid in the development of new therapies.