

## **Frequent Questions**

Many people have doubts about what it means to be a Body Donor and how the Body Donor Program of the Faculty of Medicine of the Miguel Hernández University of Elche (UMH) works.

Here you can find the answer to these questions:

### **Is the Donor Program of the Faculty of Medicine of the UMH related to those "Associations" or "Programs" of "body donation for science" advertised on the Internet offering free funeral services?**

Our Program has nothing to do with those private companies advertised on the Internet as supposedly non-profit charitable associations, that offer free collection and incineration in exchange for the body donation "for science" or "for teaching Medicine".

Without bearing in mind the discussion about the ethics or the legality of such procedures, it is known that, in fact, these companies lend the donated bodies, or parts of them, to Universities, Hospitals, etc., under payment.

The Faculty of Medicine of the Miguel Hernández University of Elche is a public High Education Institution which performs all its teaching and research activities without profit and with rendering of accounts.

In addition, our Donation Program is clear: the Donors and their relatives know at any time the place where donated bodies are located and the purpose of their use in our University.

### **Will I or my family be paid for the body donation?**

The current legislation in Spain (Law 30/1979) guarantees altruism in post-mortem donations: every donation must be voluntary and free, and it is illegal to trade with donated organs.

The greatest compensation is the contribution to the quality of the teaching both to students and professionals of Medicine and, through them, to the improvement of the health and the life of thousands of people.

### **Is there any cost for me or for my family?**

No. The University will bear all expenses. The family must contact the funeral home to advise of the collection. The number to call appears on the web: <https://sia.umh.es> If you have any problems, you can also contact the University's 24-hour phone number, which is: **(+34) 966 65 85 00**

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### **What requirements must be met to be a Donor of the Faculty of Medicine of the UMH?**

All adults can donate our body for teaching and research, without limitation of age or health status, unless suffering from a serious infectious-contagious disease at the time of death. In the donation document appear all the infectious diseases that would make the donation impossible.

You must bear in mind that the Faculty of Medicine of the UMH can only receive the bodies of people who die in the province of Alicante.

### **If I change my mind, how can I stop being a Donor of the Faculty of Medicine of the UMH?**

The donor can cancel his donation at any time, by warning his relatives not to notify the death to the UMH and destroying the donation document. If you wish, you can also inform us about your decision.

### **Does my body donation involve the donation of organs for transplant?**

The donation of body for teaching and research in the Faculty of Medicine of the UMH does not include the use of organs for transplantation.

According to the current legislation in Spain (Law 30/1979, B.O.E., October 27), we are all considered potential organ donors for transplantation upon death, except if in life we had expressed our contrary wish. However, only a few people can donate their organs in fact. This is because getting the organs for transplantation is only possible if the person dies in the Intensive Care Unit of a hospital, being still relatively young and without having suffered diseases that could have damaged their organs.

For more information, you can contact the National Transplant Organization, telephone: 902 300 224.

### **Will the removal of organs for transplant after death be compatible with my body donation?**

Unfortunately, the extraction of organs after death makes the body donation impossible for teaching and research in our Faculty. This is because the extraction of organs (except the eyes) irreparably damages the veins and the arteries, preventing the infusion of fluids necessary to preserve the body.

As it is explained in the previous question, while only some people can donate their organs for transplantation after death, all adults can donate their body for teaching and research.

### **Do I have to include the body donation in my will?**

It is not necessary. However, it is essential to inform the family or the friends about it to know and to share the donor's wishes, so they can contribute to make the donation effective at the time of death.

#### **What would it happen if, being body donor, my death occurred outside the province of Alicante?**

In this case, the relatives could contact the nearest Faculty of Medicine. Most of them also receive body donations for teaching and research. In exchange, the Faculty of Medicine of the UMH accepts to receive the body of those of their donors deceased in our province.

#### **How are the bodies preserved during the time they remain at the Faculty?**

The donated bodies are embalmed with preservatives that keep the organs and the tissues for years. This way we fulfilled the wishes of our donors to contribute with their generous and altruistic gesture to the learning of a large number of students and medical professionals who use the bodies in many different teaching and research activities.

Donations are managed through a system of anonymity that keeps the identity of donors hidden at any time. The documentation of each donor is kept in the General Registry of the University.

When signing the donation, the Donor authorizes the University to obtain and publish scientific photographs of the tissues or organs for teaching or research purposes, with the commitment to keep always hidden the identity of the donor

#### **Could be a body donation getting in the Faculty of Medicine of the UMH sent to other Faculties of Medicine?**

Our university has signed agreements with other universities and faculties of medicine to assign donations in case they need them for the same purposes.

We never trading with a body donation.

#### **How will my body be used in the Faculty of Medicine of the UMH?**

The bodies are used for dissection practices that is essential for the teaching of Human Anatomy to the students of our Faculty of Medicine and our Schools of Physiotherapy, Pharmacy and Podiatry. They are also used in workshops and seminars for surgical training so as the professionals update their knowledge of Human Anatomy and practice new medical and surgical techniques without risk to their patients. Donated bodies can also be used in scientific research projects aimed at improving the diagnosis or treatment of various health problems.

### What is done with the body once it has been used in the Faculty?

Once its use is finished, the body remains are incinerated by the Funeral services.

This is normally done after a few years without the donor's family have to intervene.