



## Wisconsin Brain Donor Program


Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH



Be a part of the solution.



## *Become a registered brain donor with the Wisconsin Brain Donor Program and join the fight against Alzheimer's disease.*

*We created this brochure to help with decision making. Share and discuss it with your family, friends, and spiritual advisors. This pamphlet cannot address every question. We welcome you to call us and discuss your questions and concerns.*

### Why consider brain donation?

There is currently no cure for Alzheimer's disease or early memory loss. Brain donations from those with and without memory problems are generous gifts that help researchers discover why some people develop memory loss and why others do not.

Every brain is unique and tells an important story. A brain from a single donor can be used in multiple research projects that investigate the treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

### Who can donate?

Only participants in our research studies can enroll in the Wisconsin Brain Donor Program. However, healthy older individuals without memory difficulties are also encouraged to contact us to be considered for enrollment.

All donation costs are covered for those accepted into the donor registry. Participation is voluntary; enrollees are free to withdraw at any time.



## What is the Wisconsin Brain Donor Program?

The Wisconsin Brain Donor Program is a repository of biologic specimens collected after death for the purpose of advancing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research. Through donated brains, tissue, blood, and cerebrospinal fluid, the Wisconsin Brain Donor Program can actively participate in helping advance knowledge of neurodegenerative diseases.

If you would like more information, or to register to be a future brain donor, please contact us.

Wisconsin Brain Donor Program  
600 Highland Avenue  
J5/1M Clinical Science Center  
Madison, WI 53792-2420

Office phone: 608-265-4000  
24-hour pager: 608-265-7000, ID# 5332  
[adrc.wisc.edu/brain-donation](http://adrc.wisc.edu/brain-donation)

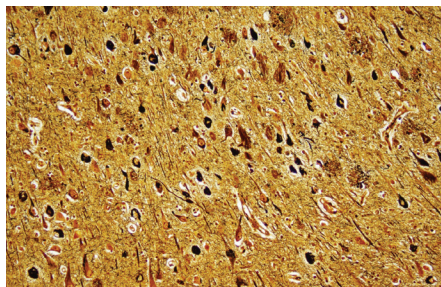
# Common Questions about Brain Donation

## Why is brain donation important?

A brain autopsy at the end of life is the most conclusive way to confirm Alzheimer's disease. The human brain is complex and some research is difficult or impossible to do with living people. Information from the autopsy helps scientists better understand Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

## Who benefits from my donation?

For many donors, knowing they will be contributing to science and potentially helping their community or family is a rewarding experience. A donation can also offer family members information about their loved one's brain health and medical conditions at the time of death. It may encourage family members to make choices in their lives that will lead to better long-term health.



A section of hippocampus of a patient with Alzheimer's disease reveals an abundance of neurofibrillary tangles, seen here as black deposits.

## What will my family receive?

Your family will receive a pathology report after the autopsy is completed. This report provides a diagnosis and will summarize findings regarding the brain. If there are questions about the report, a follow-up conference can be arranged with the doctor who prepared the report.

## When is the donation performed?

Ideally, the donation should be completed as soon as possible, within 16 hours of death.

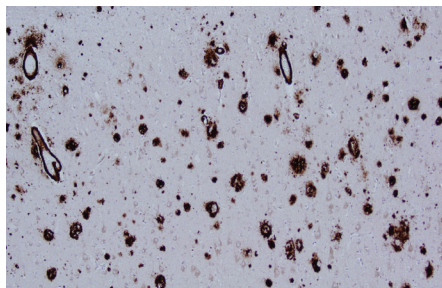


## Who performs the procedure?

Donations are done under the guidance of a board-certified neuropathologist (a doctor who specializes in diseases of the brain and nervous system).

## Will donation affect my funeral arrangements?

Brain removal does not interfere with funeral arrangements or viewing of the deceased. Donation takes about 1 hour (not including transportation) and is a common procedure that funeral directors and morticians are familiar with.



A section of frontal lobe of a patient with Alzheimer's disease examined using beta-amyloid antibody. Here brown deposits of amyloid plaques are evident in a large number.

## Where is the procedure performed?

Donations are customarily performed at University Hospital in Madison. Transportation is arranged by the donor's funeral home or cremation provider and paid for through the Wisconsin Brain Donor Program.

## Who maintains my stored samples?

The Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) and the University of Wisconsin Department of Pathology maintain stored samples for the Wisconsin Brain Donor Program.

## What if I change my mind?

You or your family can always change your mind about donating. Brain donation is a gift. We strongly encourage you to talk with your family, friends, and spiritual advisors before making your decision so they know your wishes and can help facilitate the donation process.

# Brain Donation Research Studies

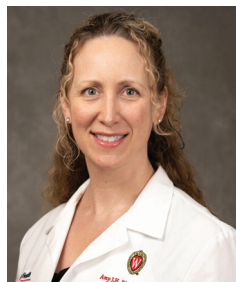
Brain donation is an important tool that helps scientists understand the development and progression of Alzheimer's disease (AD). Studies that utilize samples from the Wisconsin Brain Donor Program can be vastly different in scope. Below are two current studies utilizing resources from the Wisconsin Brain Donor Program.



Dr. Betthausen

Advancements in Alzheimer's therapies require knowing if disease pathology is present in the brain during life to know if and when to treat patients. Neuroimaging and fluid biomarkers are ways to measure brain pathology, but validating these biomarkers requires a comparison with neuropathological findings. Dr. Tobey Betthausen's lab uses brain donations, along with clinical and biomarker data collected while participants are alive, to better understand what these biomarkers can tell us about brain pathology and how they impact disease progression. These results will help scientists develop sensitive detection methods of Alzheimer's disease biomarkers and understand the timing of disease progression.

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Dr. Kind

The neighborhoods in which you lived throughout your life have an effect on your overall health. Utilizing public records, including U.S. Census data and city directories, Dr. Amy Kind leads a team at the Center for Health Disparities Research (CHDR) to create detailed residential histories of research participants from the Wisconsin Brain Donor Program and 21 other brain banks across the national Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers network. The CHDR research team then links lifetime residences with data sources that describe county- or neighborhood-level characteristics, such as the Neighborhood Atlas. This data, paired with autopsy results, will allow CHDR to determine connections between social exposome factors, such as neighborhood disadvantage and Alzheimer's disease risk.

# Wisconsin Brain Donor Program

## FACTS

The **Wisconsin  
Brain Donor  
Program** was  
established in

# 1995

# 1

donation  
powers  
**decades of  
research**



More than

# 1,400

are registered  
to donate



Brain autopsy is the  
**'gold standard'**

way to diagnose  
Alzheimer's disease and  
other brain conditions



Donations  
from 500+  
individuals  
available for request  
from scientists  
worldwide

## For More Information

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