



A brain donation to Autism BrainNet creates a legacy that helps advance research on autism and related neurodevelopmental disorders. Considering brain donation for research may be difficult, but long-term planning can help minimize the burden of decision-making at the time of death. In the midst of grief and loss, Autism BrainNet's donor families report that they find a sense of hope and purpose in their loved one's continued contribution to science.

For more information

Call: 877-333-0999

Email: info@autismbrainnet.org

Visit: AutismBrainNet.org

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Advancing research through the gift of brain donation

877.333.0999

AutismBrainNet.org

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What is Autism BrainNet?

Autism BrainNet is a program that promotes brain donation. The goal is to create a bank of donated postmortem brain tissue that facilitates research into the biological causes of autism and related neurodevelopmental disorders. Knowledge from these research studies will ultimately improve the quality of life of individuals who are affected by these disorders.

Autism BrainNet works with families, researchers, and providers to promote a greater knowledge of postmortem brain tissue research, and to ensure the most compassionate and smooth donation process for families during a difficult time.

Autism BrainNet is comprised of four biorepositories, or nodes, in the United States and Canada:

- ▶ [Massachusetts General Brigham Hospital, Boston, MA](#)
- ▶ [University of California, Davis MIND Institute, Sacramento, CA](#)
- ▶ [University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX](#)
- ▶ [Douglas-Bell Canada Brain Bank, Montreal, Quebec, Canada](#)

Each node follows the high standards set by Autism BrainNet to collect, process, store and distribute the precious gift of donated brain tissue to qualified researchers worldwide. Applications to receive brain tissue are evaluated for scientific merit by a peer-review committee, the Autism BrainNet Scientific Review Committee.

Why is it important to study the brain to understand autism?

There is still much to learn about the differences between the brains of those who are autistic and those who are neurotypical. For understanding the cellular and molecular biology of autism, postmortem brain research is an essential component. Studying postmortem brain tissue is extremely important for researchers to better understand the neuroanatomical, cellular and molecular changes associated with autism in the human brain.

What is the process for making a brain donation?

Autism BrainNet makes the donation process as simple as possible for every family. Donor families are treated with respect and compassion and are provided with ongoing support. Here are the steps:

STEP 1

When a death has occurred or is near, the family or healthcare provider calls Autism BrainNet at **877-333-0999** within 24 hours for immediate assistance. Our staff is available 24/7 and will walk your family through the donation process. Autism BrainNet clinical staff will work with the legal next of kin to obtain authorization for donation.

STEP 2

Autism BrainNet staff will coordinate brain recovery and transportation to the nearest Autism BrainNet node.

STEP 3

An Autism BrainNet clinician will follow up with the donor family to schedule an interview to learn more about the donor.

Is there a cost associated with a donation to Autism BrainNet?

No. Autism BrainNet takes care of all the financial costs associated with the donation.

Does brain donation interfere with funeral plans?

No. Brain donation does not interfere with autopsy and funeral plans, including having an open-casket viewing.

Who can become a brain donor for Autism BrainNet?

Autism BrainNet accepts donations from:

- ▶ Individuals of any age **with a diagnosis of autism**, with or without other related health conditions.
- ▶ Individuals **without a diagnosis of autism but with a neurodevelopmental disorder or genetic condition related to autism** (examples are Dup15q Syndrome, Prader-Willi Syndrome, Down Syndrome, Angelman Syndrome, Fragile X Syndrome and other genetic diagnoses). Tissue from individuals with a genetic condition is important because it may help to understand why a particular genetic condition leads to autism in some cases but not in others.
- ▶ Individuals up to the age of 50 **without a diagnosis of autism**, neurologic or psychiatric conditions or severe brain injury. This donation will benefit scientific studies by allowing the comparison of brain tissue from people with and without autism.

If you would like to become a brain donor, it is important to let your family know. Your family can help carry out your decision by calling Autism BrainNet and providing authorization for donation. You may sign the back of the card below and keep it in your wallet.

