

A Comparison Guide: Burial, Cremation and Donation

	Burial	Cremation	Whole Body Donation for Research and Education	University Donation
Description	The body is typically embalmed for preservation, placed in a casket and then a cemetery plot.	The body is reduced to fine particles known as cremated remains which are then placed in a container, urn, interred or scattered.	The body is gifted to an organization for the purpose of supporting medical research, education and training. The tissues not used are then cremated and returned.	The body is gifted to a university for the purpose of supporting education and training. The body is often embalmed and then cremated after 1-3 years. Cremated remains may or may not be returned.
Cost	Avg Casket: \$2,000 Avg Funeral + Burial plot/Niche + Marker: \$9,000	\$500 to \$3,000 depending on provider. Direct cremations will typically offer the lowest cost	(\$0) includes transportation, cremation, return of cremains and filing of the death certificate	Most are no cost. Some universities may charge for transportation outside of a specific distance or a processing fee
Benefits to Individual, Family and Society	May fulfill a cultural tradition, provides a final resting place such as a cemetery or mausoleum for loved ones to visit and can provide a sense of closure or final goodbye.	May fulfill a cultural tradition, can provide a place for the loved ones to visit or allow multiple loved ones the ability to share cremains. Generally less expensive than burial and may reduce financial strain.	In addition to cremation benefits, the donor and family may feel comfort in knowing that the donation serves a purpose in helping to advance healthcare and serve future generations. Donation may also eliminate financial strain. Tissue may be gifted to educational, clinical, and research pursuits across the globe. Research institutions, medical facilities, device developers, universities, and additional providers extending care to the public will benefit and impact generations to come.	The donor and family may feel comfort in knowing that the donation serves an important purpose in helping to train existing and future healthcare providers and serve future generations. Depending on the program, may eliminate or reduce financial strain. Tissue received will typically remain at the university to serve for its educational, clinical, and research pursuits. Students train using cadavers before they extend care to the public as licensed professionals.
Remains	Buried	Returned to family within 1-3 weeks. Expedited service may be available for an additional cost.	Returned to family in 3-5 weeks at no cost. Local providers may offer quickest return.	If returned, typically will be provided to the family after use (1-3 years). Most programs will also host an annual memorial service for loved ones and donors.
Choosing a Provider	Ask for references or referrals. Select a provider that best meet your needs and preferences (cost, location, affiliations, personal wishes). Search online, call, or request to meet with a representative. Most individuals will qualify for whole body donation for medical research. Generally a donor must be an adult without any active contagious diseases and weigh less than 300 lbs. University donation may have additional criteria due to the need for donors with normal anatomy and inability to place more donors than required by the school annually. Contact the program of your interest for additional details as criteria may differ.			
CA Resources	Your healthcare provider may have a list of local providers. You can also contact your local Funeral Consumer Alliance (FCA) for affordable options and pricing www.fca-calif.org	Your healthcare provider may have a list of local providers. You can also contact your local Funeral Consumer Alliance (FCA) for affordable options and pricing www.fca-calif.org	Working with a local, accredited program within your state may offer wider acceptance criteria, faster return of remains and peace of mind <u>Science Care - CA*</u> <u>Research for Life - CA</u> <u>LifeLegacy - AZ*</u> <u>MedCure - OR*</u> <u>* = AATB-accredited</u>	Working with a local, accredited university may offer wider acceptance criteria, lower cost and peace of mind UCD, UCI, UCLA, UCSD, UCSF, Loma Linda University, LA College of Chiropractic, Western University - Pomona, Stanford
Memorial Benefits for Veterans and their Spouses, Dependents and Survivors	Honorably discharged Veterans may be eligible for memorial benefits such as burial or interment of cremated remains in a VA national cemetery, a headstone or marker with an inscription, a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate, and a committal service with military honors. Burial, cremation or donation arrangements will still need to be made separately. Benefits for eligible spouses, dependents and survivors may include burial with the Veteran and headstone inscription. Eligible spouses, dependents, and survivors may be buried in a national cemetery even if their Veteran loved one is not buried or memorialized in a national cemetery, or if their death occurs before the Veteran's. Contact the nearest VA regional office, Veteran Service Officer or visit explore.va.gov for more information.			

There are various options to honor each individual. These decisions are very personal and often tied to the cultural expectations and emotions of all involved. Take time to talk about your options and preferences to help clarify concerns and ensure your wishes are fulfilled.