

## Medical Donation Program (MDP) Overview

The goal of the MDP is to empower MSK patients to donate their tissues to ongoing cancer research at MSK after they pass away. After a patient joins the program, the MDP handles all arrangements related to the tissue donation. Upon passing away, the MDP collects the cancer and normal tissues in a timely manner that should not interfere with most funeral arrangements. There is no cost to the patient or their family to donate tissues.

## MDP Research

Examples of research questions the donated tissues can help answer:

- Why do some patients' cancers never respond to treatment?
- Why do some patients' cancers that initially respond to treatment stop doing so over time?
- How do cancer cells spread to other organs in the body?
- Why do cancer cells in patients with the same type of cancer spread to different organs in different patients?

The MDP also collaborates with many researchers throughout MSK for special projects related to specific tumor types. The information from these studies will help MSK researchers design new drugs and treatments to better treat cancer.



## Impact of Medical Donation Research

Please feel free to ask us about our on-going projects. Tissue donations have led to major findings from MSK researchers. Two examples are provided below.

One study showed that there is a long window of opportunity for early detection of pancreatic cancer. This was an important finding because pancreatic cancer was long thought to grow too fast for screening to be effective. (*Yachida S, et al. Distant Metastasis Occurs Late during the Genetic Evolution of Pancreatic Cancer. Nature. 2010;467(7319):1114-1117.*)

Another study showed why and how some breast cancers develop resistance to therapy. It was also featured on MSK's blog: [www.mskcc.org/blog/study-reveals-how-some-breast-become-resistant-targeted-drugs](http://www.mskcc.org/blog/study-reveals-how-some-breast-become-resistant-targeted-drugs). (*Juric D et al.. Convergent Loss of PTEN Leads to Clinical Resistance to a PI(3)Ka inhibitor. Nature. 2014;518(7538): 240-244.*)

## Who may I contact with questions?

You may contact the MDP staff:

T: 646-888-3253  
E: [pthMDP@mskcc.org](mailto:pthMDP@mskcc.org)

You may also discuss the program with your MSK clinician.



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Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center.



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## Medical Donation Program at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

**Empowering patients at the  
end of their life to support  
cutting edge research at MSK**





## Important information about MDP

### Who may join the MDP?

MSK patients with a cancer history who are expected to pass away within about 3 hours (driving time) from MSK Memorial Hospital in NY, NJ, CT, or PA are eligible. The MDP is not able to accept patients with certain serious infectious diseases.

### How and when do patients join the MDP?

Interested patients should contact the MDP (646-888-3253 or [pthMDP@mskcc.org](mailto:pthMDP@mskcc.org)) or discuss the MDP with their MSK physician while they are still able to make their own decisions and complete forms. Parents may also consent on behalf of a pediatric patient. The MDP must have the signed forms before we can work with the patient's funeral home to pre-arrange transport to and from MSK (if needed). On occasion, we may be unable to confirm transport and will not be able to collect tissues from that patient.

### When does tissue collection happen?

The MDP collects tissue during business hours after the patient passes away. Collection is usually performed the first business day after passing (or sooner, if feasible). The procedure takes up to a few hours. We may be able to work with participants with stricter timing needs on a case-by-case basis. Patients may donate optional blood samples while they're still living.

### Will the family receive results or reports about the patient's samples?

No, the MDP only performs research with samples and is not certified to provide clinical testing or any pathology reports.

### Is there a charge for medical donation?

No, all study-related costs are covered by the MDP including any excess costs required to transport the patient to MSK for the procedure. The patient's family or estate remains responsible for the cost of the funeral and all other expenses related to burial.

### Will medical donation affect funeral arrangements?

Patients requiring very quick burials (e.g., within 24 hours of death) should discuss their needs with the MDP. In other circumstances, the procedure should not affect funeral services.

### Are there religious or cultural conflicts?

People may worry that medical donation may conflict with beliefs or traditions. Individuals of a variety of backgrounds have made medical donations. However, end-of-life decisions are always personal. Patients may want to discuss their decision with relatives and religious or spiritual advisors.

### If I consent can I change my mind?

Yes, you can change your mind at any time by notifying the MDP or your MSK physician.

