

Welcome and Expectations

As a participant in the anatomy labs at Rutgers Health Anatomy Laboratory, you are expected to follow all policies outlined in this agreement, the course syllabus, laboratory protocols, and any additional instructions provided by faculty or the anatomy lab supervisor.

This agreement outlines critical policies related to lab access, safety procedures, professional conduct, and the respectful care of donors. After reading this document, please consult with your course canvas site and course director for more detailed guidance.

While many of these policies are in place to protect your safety and that of your peers, they also ensure the dignity and respect of the donors who have made this educational opportunity possible. Access to the anatomy lab is a privilege. Before entering the lab or viewing donor body images, you must read this agreement in its entirety and submit your attestation via the question at the end of this document.

Failure to meet these expectations may be considered a lapse in professionalism. In such cases, appropriate follow-up will occur, which may include a review of lab access privileges or other academic responses as determined by the school.

Respect for the Donor, Your First Patient

The anatomy lab offers a profound opportunity to learn from individuals who have donated their bodies to medical education. These donors—**our teachers and first patients**—deserve the highest level of respect, both in and outside the lab.

All donations are legal and ethically coordinated through our [Anatomical Association](#). Every donor was a resident of New Jersey and part of a family and community. Their loved ones entrusted us with their bodies for your education. Treat each donor with the same care, compassion, and integrity you would offer a living patient. This mindset lays the foundation for your future clinical practice.

Conduct and Lab Safety Expectations

- **Respect and Dignity:** Donor bodies must be treated with professionalism at all times. Disrespectful behavior—including inappropriate comments or actions—will not be tolerated. Professional and respectful language (in speech or written) is expected.
- **Confidentiality:** Donor identities must remain confidential. Follow HIPAA-aligned privacy practices.
- **Lab Access:** Lab access is limited to authorized individuals with ID badge access. Visitors are not permitted without explicit Anatomy Course Director approval.
- **Proper Donor Care:** All donor body materials, including bones and tissues, must remain in the lab. Donors must be kept moist with a wetting solution and fully covered when not in use. Never leave a donor unattended or uncovered.
- **Dissection Guidelines:** Students may observe multiple donors but may only dissect at their assigned table and during scheduled lab times. Follow all dissector instructions.
- **Media Restrictions:** No photos, recordings, or media of any kind are allowed. Music and video broadcasts are also prohibited. Discussion or depiction of donor-related experiences on social media is strictly prohibited. While electronic devices may be used in the laboratory for notes, dissection guides, etc., recording or photographing any of the human anatomical material or participants is strictly prohibited.
- **Reporting:** Promptly report any concerns regarding donor condition, lab safety, or policy violations to the Anatomy Course Director. If you feel unwell or faint, alert someone immediately. Lab odors may affect some individuals more than others.
- **PPE:** Gloves are required at all times. Safety glasses and masks are available. Never leave the lab with gloves on. Dispose of used gloves and biohazardous materials in the red bins. Blades go in the red sharps containers.
- **Clothing:** Proper attire must be worn in all anatomy labs. Wear fully-covering, comfortable clothing. This includes long pants or floor length skirts, full coverage t-shirts (short or long sleeve), and closed-toed shoes. No open-toed shoes or shorts. Tie back long hair.
- **Lab Maintenance and Shared Responsibility:** Each student is responsible for cleanliness and safety—wash and dry instruments and maintain your workspace. The laboratory must remain clean. This includes disposing of garbage, cleaning off the counters and laboratory tables, and proper cleaning and storage of the instruments (i.e., removing scalpel blades and disposing of them in the sharps container, washing and drying the tools, replacing the storage bins to the appropriate location).
- **Donor Care:** Students will make sure all anatomical materials are kept with their respective donor at all times. This includes ensuring that all tissue removed during a dissection is disposed of in its proper receptacle assigned to the respective donor (e.g., bags between the legs of the donors). Donor body care is a shared team responsibility. Donors must be kept moist (with a wetting solution) and covered (with moist toweling and plastic sheeting) at all times when not being studied. Dissection is limited to your assigned table.
- **Food/Drink:** Not permitted in the lab under any circumstances (including the small group discussion areas).

Donor Preparation

Details such as age and cause of death are posted in the lab for educational purposes.

Donors are embalmed via the arterial system—typically through the carotid artery—using a preservative solution primarily composed of alcohol and phenol.

- The brain is injected with 300 ml of 37% formaldehyde and stored in a solution of 25% ethylene glycol and 75% water. The brain is stored in a solution of ethylene glycol (25%) and water (75%).
- The full-body preservation includes Formaldehyde (1.0%), Ethylene Glycol (20%), Isopropyl Alcohol (20%), Phenol (7.6%), Water (50%), Potassium Nitrate (0.2%), and Borax (0.2%).
- Use the wetting solution (60% water, 20% Simple Green Lemon, 20% Simple Green D Pro 5) regularly to maintain moisture for the donor body.

Avoid contact with your skin, eyes, or mouth. Refer to the SDS list of chemicals known to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity and the latest formaldehyde exposure monitoring results.

Safety Contacts

RWJMS • Kathy Ann Mitchell, Manager of Educational Services 732.235.4510 kmm557@rwjms.rutgers.edu • Peter Skeels Manager, REHS 848.445.2550 peter.skeels@rutgers.edu	NJMS - Newark, NJ • Lisa Furr-Gordon Anatomy Lab Supervisor (973) 972-4647 furrkoli@njms.rutgers.edu
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Student Accommodations

Students with accommodations or health concerns, including pregnancy, should notify Student Affairs and the Anatomy Course Director. The Anatomy Course Director will collaborate with a Health Safety Specialist at REHS to assess potential environmental exposures and help determine the best path forward.

Research Studies

Students who are approved to conduct research in the anatomy lab outside of course requirements must adhere to all policies in this agreement, including those related to lab access, donor care, safety, and professionalism.

All research activities involving donor bodies or tissues materials require prior approval from the Anatomy Course Director and must comply with Rutgers IRB policies and any applicable

institutional or departmental research guidelines. Research-related lab access is granted on a case-by-case basis and may be subject to additional safety protocols or supervision requirements.

Students engaged in research must ensure their work does not interfere with the scheduled educational use of the lab and must maintain the same standards of respect, confidentiality, and care as during regular coursework.

Final Perspective

It is natural to feel apprehensive about working with donor bodies—especially if this is your first personal encounter with death. Most students find that their comfort increases with time and experience. Our faculty and staff are here to support you and are committed to making this experience as meaningful and positive as possible. If you find yourself struggling to adjust, please do not hesitate to reach out for help. Faculty and staff are here to support you.

Remember, the donors made a deliberate choice. They chose to provide a unique learning opportunity for you—to study the human body without the inhibitions of learning from a living patient. Take time to reflect on the extraordinary and generous gift given to you by a stranger for the benefit of your medical education and demonstrate respect for the donors at all times. The donors have a great deal to teach us, especially if we are open to learning from them and take full advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

Agreement and Attestation

By submitting the [attestation](#), you confirm that you have read, understood, and agree to follow all policies outlined in this document. These expectations are in place to ensure a respectful, safe, and professional learning environment for everyone. Lab access is a privilege and is expected to be treated with respect.