

Have you ever wondered what happens to your body when you die? How are deceased bodies preserved for burial, and if a cremation is requested, what does that process entail? Well, wonder no further. For the morbidly curious among you, here's a brief look at:

# DEATH, Embalming, and Burial Types

Once pronounced dead, a body is moved to a morgue and placed in a refrigerator of sorts called a **positive temperature cold chamber** where the body is kept slightly above freezing.

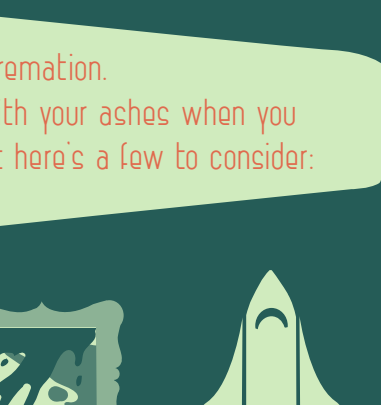
At this point, a body is either prepped for embalming or sent to a crematorium. Let's look at cremation first:

## Cremation

**Cremation** is a green alternative to a traditional burial. It doesn't use ground space and doesn't require embalming, which puts carcinogenic chemicals in the soil. Here's how the process works:

The body is cleared of anything valuable, like jewelry, and laid out.

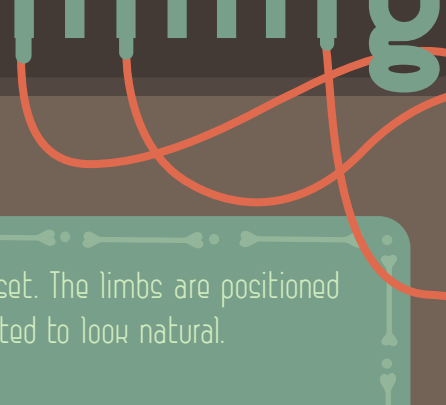
The body is placed in a wood coffin, which will burn away in the fire.



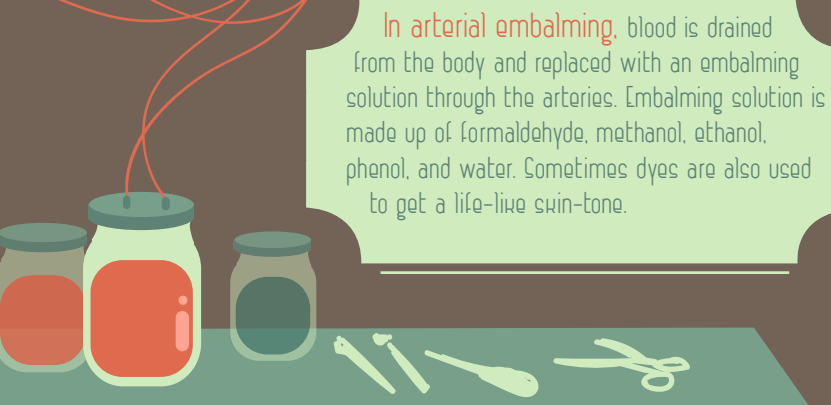
Next, the body goes into a cremation chamber for 1-3 hours and burns at a temperature of between 1400 and 1800 degrees Fahrenheit.

Once the body is burned up, a magnet picks up any metal left behind. Fillings and metal implants will survive the cremation process.

The cool bone fragments are ground down to a fine powder. The average body makes about 4-7 lbs of ash. The family of the deceased can choose an urn to keep the ashes in.



That's all there is to cremation. The cool part is what you can do with your ashes when you die. The possibilities are endless but here's a few to consider:



Have your ashes put into fireworks

Be compressed into a diamond

Get mixed into paint and used for art

Be launched into space

Now, as neat as cremation is, it's still not the preferred method of body disposal, with about 42% of bodies being cremated as opposed to buried. It is growing in popularity, but traditional embalming and burial is still the way many people prefer to do things.

## Embalming

First, the body and face are set. The limbs are positioned correctly and the face is adjusted to look natural.

The eyes are glued shut, and "eye caps" rest under the lids to keep the eye shape.

The mouth is sewn shut (otherwise it would hang open) and arranged naturally.

The arms are massaged to help with rigor mortis and then positioned as desired.



There are two types of embalming that happen: **arterial and cavity**

In **arterial embalming**, blood is drained from the body and replaced with an embalming solution through the arteries. Embalming solution is made up of formaldehyde, methanol, ethanol, phenol, and water. Sometimes dyes are also used to get a life-like skin-tone.

In **cavity embalming**, the abdomen is opened and the organs are drained of fluid and gas. The empty space is replaced with formaldehyde-based embalming fluid. The body is sealed back up, and the embalming process is complete.



Once the body has been embalmed, make-up is added to the face and the hair is styled to make the body seem more natural and life-like.



Make-up is applied to the face and neck and any other bare skin to hide the discoloration and to give skin a living glow. Hair is styled according to the family's wishes.

If the body suffered from an injury or illness, cosmetic reconstruction can be done on the face or body. The mortician can use skin-colored wax, cotton, or other materials to fix anything from blemishes to wounds.



## Burial

A prepared body is now ready for burial. There are lots of options as far as where you can put a body, storage-wise and as well as some interesting locations:



Coffin

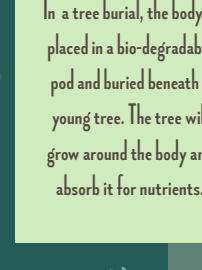


Casket



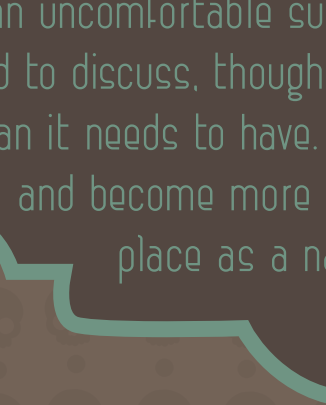
Urn

(Urn can be buried too)

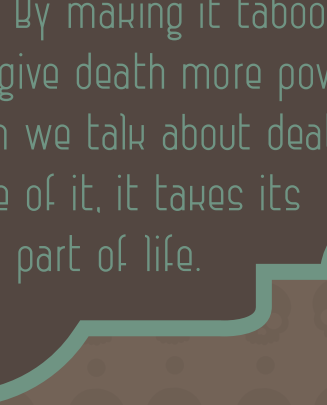


Crypt

Like cremation, there's plenty of creative ways to be buried six feet under.



A natural burial is where the body is either buried with a biodegradable casket or buried completely exposed, so that it will decompose naturally.



In a reef burial, the body is placed in a reef and left to be decomposed by fish and gradually grow into the coral itself.



In a tree burial, the body is placed in a bio-degradable pod and buried beneath a young tree. The tree will grow around the body and absorb it for nutrients.

What's the point of talking about death? Well for most people, death is an uncomfortable subject. By making it taboo or hard to discuss, though, we give death more power than it needs to have. When we talk about death and become more aware of it, it takes its place as a natural part of life.