

Care of the body

The funeral director will take care of preparation of the body, dressing and placing into a casket. You will be asked to provide the clothes and may help with dressing if you wish.

Embalming is usually carried out to slow the natural decomposition process and improve the physical appearance. It allows time for family and friends to gather and say their goodbyes. It is recommended to give the best possible presentation of the deceased but is not compulsory (except where the body is to be transported by plane).

The Embalming

The process begins with bathing the body and washing the hair. The facial features are posed with the eyes and mouth closed.

Embalming fluids are injected through one or more arteries and body fluids expelled through corresponding veins. The fluids kill bacteria and retard the decomposition process. The choice of fluids and amount used depends on the condition of the body and the length of time the body needs to be kept before burial or cremation.

The main ingredient in the most common embalming fluids is formaldehyde. Care must

be taken with its use in the mortuary as it is a known carcinogen. The FDANZ has a code of practice for the use of chemicals in mortuaries. Formaldehyde does not accumulate in the environment and breaks down as a result of natural processes in the soil.

While embalming chemicals are not a serious environmental problem some people still wish to reduce or eliminate them. It is possible to carry out a 'light' embalming using 'low index' chemicals. We are happy to discuss with you the option of a 'light' embalming or no embalming and the implications of these choices.

Following the embalming, restorative techniques may be necessary to improve the physical appearance of the body. This is usually required following traumatic deaths if family and friends wish to view.

Finally the hair is brushed and styled as it was in life. A natural skin colour is restored, using a light touch of cosmetics where necessary.

More about formaldehyde

The active ingredient in most embalming fluids is formaldehyde.

Formaldehyde is the simplest aldehyde with the chemical formula HCHO . It is a colourless, flammable gas with a pungent smell. Pure

gaseous formaldehyde is uncommon since it readily polymerises into paraformaldehyde, a white crystalline solid. Formaldehyde is also known by a number of synonyms: methanal, methylene oxide and methylaldehyde.

Formaldehyde is found in nature, being produced in small amounts by plants, animals and humans during normal metabolic processes. It is also a by-product of combustion in cars, low temperature incinerators, and wood burning. For commercial purposes it is produced by the oxidation of methanol.

Formalin is a 40% solution of formaldehyde in water, usually with a small amount of methanol added. It is used as an antiseptic, disinfectant and preservative for biological materials.

Formaldehyde is widely used in industrial processes including the production of fertiliser, paper, plywood and urea-formaldehyde resins.

Viewing

We usually recommend people take the opportunity to view the body after the embalming and preparation are complete. This can happen at the Funeral Home or you may wish to take the deceased person home – either in their casket or tucked into their bed.

Children are also very welcome to view. We are happy to help with children and explain to them what has happened. They may wish to leave something special in the casket as a way of saying their goodbyes – flowers or photos or a drawing or even a much loved handkerchief.



Broadway Funeral Home

Discretion and Confidentiality Assured

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Caring Funeral Professionals

Care of the Body

(Embalming)



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