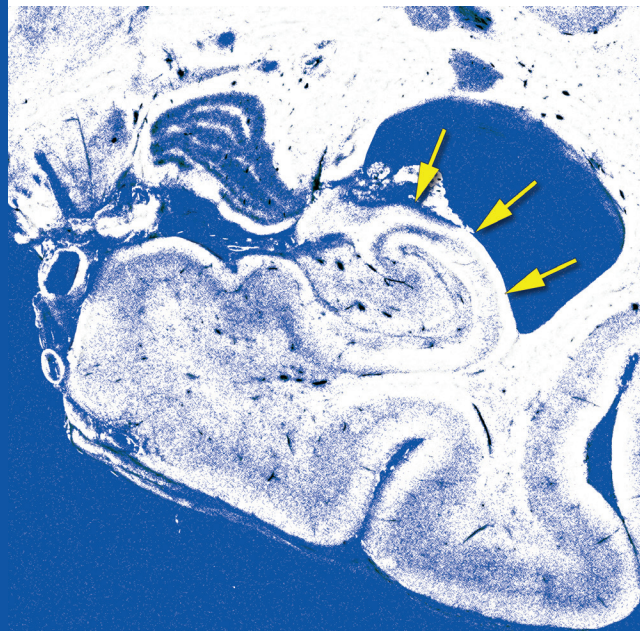


Normal memory cortex (hippocampus)



Shrunken memory cortex in Alzheimer's disease

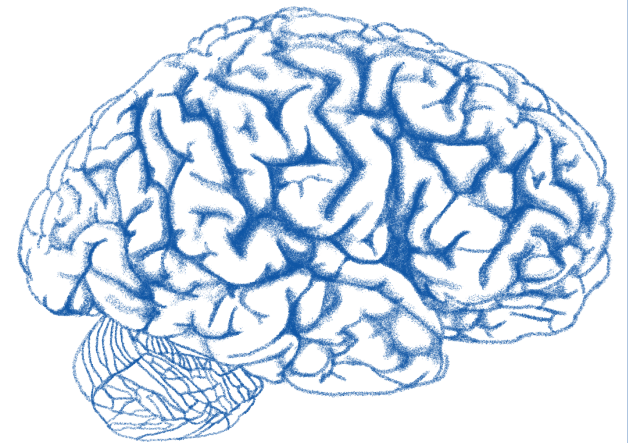


Thank you for considering a brain autopsy.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please call;

8 AM - 4 PM weekdays:
403-944-4745

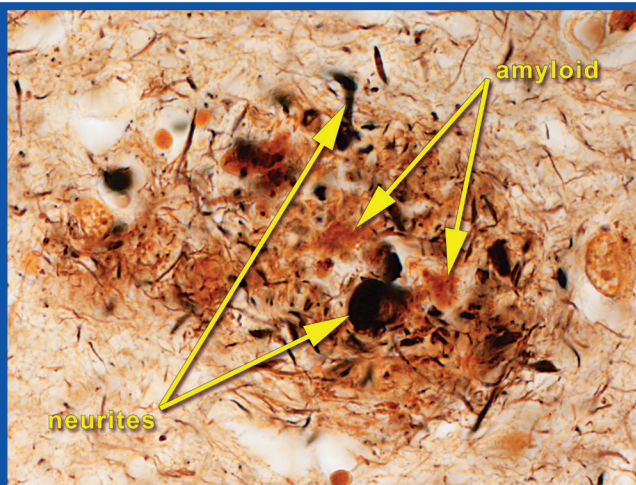
After hours: 403-944-1689



How We Learn From

The Brain

Cognitive Neurosciences Clinic



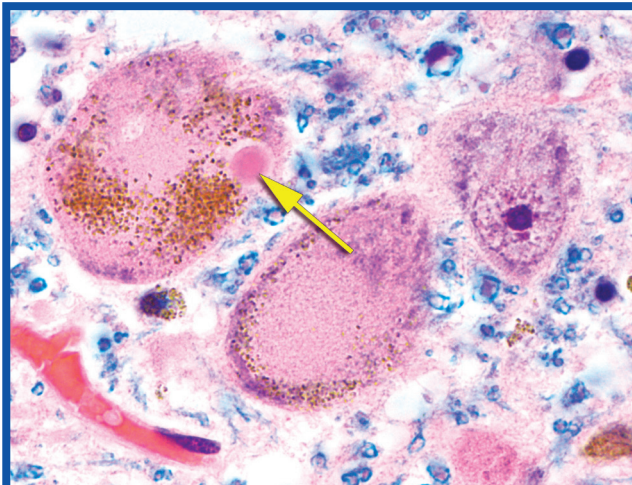
Alzheimer disease neuritic amyloid plaque



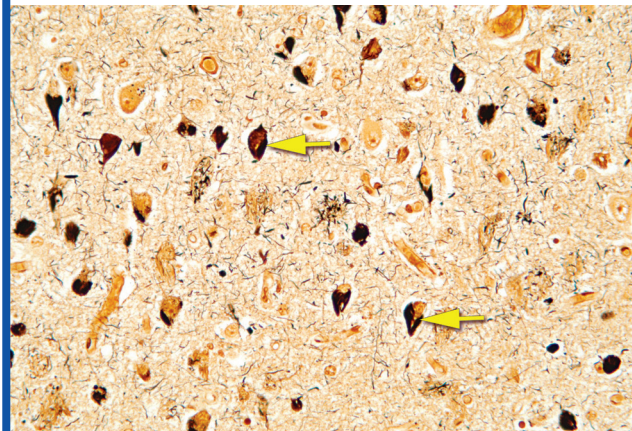
Abnormal beta amyloid deposits in Alzheimer's disease

We learn from the brain through autopsy.

Brain autopsies are important. They help confirm a suspected diagnosis or provide a diagnosis when the clinical impression is uncertain. Autopsies also determine the extent of disease throughout the brain. If the family has consented, tissue not required for diagnosis can be used for ongoing research into the causes and possible therapies for neurological diseases.



Lewy body in Parkinson's disease



Abnormal neurofibrillary tangles in Alzheimer's disease

- In many of these disorders, including dementias, doctors have no single test that can confirm the diagnosis during life.

Having this confirmation of diagnosis can:

- Increase the certainty of family history for your future generations.
- Impact a family's decision about genetic testing.
- Inform research into the causes and possible therapies for dementias and other neurologic disorders.

Important Information

- An autopsy is an examination of the body after death. It is done as soon as possible after a patient expires and takes from one (brain only) to four hours (full autopsy). A neuropathologist, who is a medical doctor with special training, inspects the brain, takes appropriate samples, examines them under a microscope, orders appropriate tests, and prepares a written report that includes the diagnosis. This can take several months.
- The patient's next of kin must give permission for an autopsy. Alberta Health Services requires family and a physician to complete a special consent form. This form **MUST BE SIGNED AFTER** a patient passes away.
- Alberta Health Services does not charge for an autopsy on a patient who is an Alberta resident or is covered by Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan. All autopsies in the Calgary Zone are performed at Foothills Medical Centre. If you request an autopsy, your funeral home will contact Foothills Medical Centre to make all arrangements.
- The findings from the autopsy are provided to the patient's physicians and will be shared with you.
- Should you consent to an autopsy, please consider allowing some tissue to be used for research and teaching. A check-box on the autopsy consent form will indicate your wishes.