



**Guy's and St Thomas'**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Research Biobanking

Supporting research  
for better diagnosis  
and treatments for  
patients

Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals with their academic partner, King's College London, support research by managing several disease-specific biobanks, including, cancer, dermatology, infectious diseases, thrombosis and women's health.

## **What is a biobank?**

Your samples can be used in a broad range of scientific research leading to breakthroughs in prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

Your donated samples can make a real difference

## **Samples**

If you have an operation, not all of the tissue is needed for diagnosis. We would like to 'bank' the unused pieces and use them for research.

Similarly, if you are having a biopsy or some blood taken, we would like to take a little bit more for a biobank.

Sometimes, we may also ask for saliva, urine or stool samples.

We use these samples in many different projects, so would like to keep them until they run out, which could be more than 20 years.

## **Information**

We would also like to collect information about you and your medical condition to add to the biobank database. We can then identify patients who have similar diseases or have been treated in a similar way.

## **How does a biobank support research?**

The same disease can affect individuals in various ways, with some responding better to treatment than others. Scientists need to study tissue, blood, urine and other samples from people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds if they are to help all patients.

By using research biobanks, scientists can quickly access a large number of samples and information from the local patient population.

## **Confidentiality**

We have a legal and a moral duty to ensure that research is conducted with the maximum respect for participants and their privacy.

Therefore, we always seek consent to use samples and access medical data. When we provide these samples to scientists they are anonymised. No information that allows you to be identified will ever be released. We have robust systems to ensure this does not happen.

## **What do we ask of you?**

When you attend Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals, you may be asked about donating samples to a biobank and giving us access to your medical information. Participation is completely voluntary and your decision will not affect your clinical care in any way.

Also, if you change your mind, you are free to withdraw your consent at any time and we will dispose of any samples we may still have in the biobank.

By joining, you can help us better understand diseases that affect you, as well as, future generations.

## **Information**

You may receive more detailed information about a biobank at your appointment and will have an opportunity to ask questions.

## **Consent form**

You will be asked to complete a consent form, which allows a biobank to collect samples and data. We also hope that you will agree for us to collect surplus samples from any future surgery you may have. On some consent forms you can even choose the types of research you'd like your samples to be used for.

## **Sample collection**

We may ask if you are willing to donate blood, saliva or urine samples if you attend clinics in the future. These samples can be used to help identify new biomarkers, which are biological signs of abnormality. They can be used to monitor health and help to predict how well a treatment will work.

Our belief is that clinical biobanking is essential for the next generation of patient care.

With your help we can take our research and quest for better treatments to another level.

At our biobanks, we put patients first. Patients are not only the beneficiary of the research we support, they are also essential in guiding our activities and making sure that the information we provide is relevant.

We appreciate that there are times when being asked to donate to a biobank is not your priority. So, we work with patient representatives to minimise the impact on you, whilst ensuring that we continue to comply with all the regulations.

Unfortunately, we cannot accept samples from all patients into our research biobanks, so we tend to approach you.

For more information speak to the clinical staff who are looking after you.

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A list of sources is available

## **Who do we ask to donate to the Biobank?**

- Patients who attend our Hospitals.
- Healthy volunteers.

## **What samples might be collected?**

- Any tissue taken during surgery that is not required for diagnosis
- Extra blood or tissue whilst these are being taken for diagnosis or treatment.
- Urine, saliva, faeces collected specifically for the Biobank.

## **What data are collected?**

- Details about your diagnosis, treatments and response to treatment.
- Family history.
- Other illnesses you have or medicines you take.
- Smoking and drinking habits.

## **How could your samples and data be used?**

- Scientists from the NHS, universities and commercial companies (national and international) can apply to use samples and data.
- To identify new biomarkers that will predict how well a treatment will work. This may include examining genetic changes.
- For research where donated tissue samples are kept alive and grown in the laboratory or used in animal models, we always seek specific consent.