

HUMAN BIOMATERIALS RESOURCE CENTRE

Expectant Mothers Information Sheet (over 18s)

Introduction

- The Human Biomaterials Resource Centre (HBRC) is a 'tissue bank' (also called a 'biobank' or 'bioresource'). It collects and stores human samples in a secure environment for ethically approved biomedical research. Scientists need human samples in order to find out how diseases start, and to find new ways of diagnosing and treating illnesses.
- This information sheet explains what happens when a sample is donated to the HBRC. Please take time to read it carefully and ask if anything is not clear. If you have any questions at a later date, please contact us using the details at the bottom of this sheet.

Why are we inviting you?

- Your baby's umbilical cord blood contains special cells called 'stem cells'. These are invaluable for research into the treatment of a growing number of disorders. Your baby's umbilical cord and placenta are also useful, for example in the study of pregnancy conditions like pre-eclampsia, or in the study of blood vessels. We ask many people to give us samples, in order to make sure we have enough for research now, and in the future.

What are we asking you to do?

- We are inviting you to donate samples of your baby's placenta, umbilical cord, or cord blood to the HBRC once your baby has been born. These samples are normally discarded.
- We would also like your permission to collect samples that have already been, or will be, collected as part of *your* routine care. Samples may be 'leftovers' from diagnostic tests and stored within the hospital pathology laboratories, or they may be 'waste' samples produced during surgical or clinical procedures and then normally discarded. These 'leftover' and 'waste' samples can be extremely useful for scientists.
- On some occasions, we may ask for a small additional sample of your own blood, because it is often very useful for scientists to have a matched maternal blood sample. This can usually be collected at the same time as a routine procedure, so it should not involve any extra pain, discomfort or inconvenience. We will only ever ask to collect additional samples if it is safe and easy to do so, and there is a specific research need. You do **NOT** have to agree to its collection at the time.
- We would also like permission to access the clinical information collected during your pregnancy and the birth. This information is scientifically useful in biomedical research.
- We will ask for your permission using a consent form. You will be given a copy to keep. Please also keep this information sheet to remind you of what you were asked to do, and why.

What will happen if you agree?

- After your baby is born, the placenta and umbilical cord will be delivered as normal. With your permission, and only when clinical staff say it is OK to do so, they will be collected by HBRC staff.
- When your sample arrives at the HBRC, a member of staff will assign it a unique sample code. The link between the sample code and your identity will be retained securely within the NHS.
- Samples may be released straightaway to an approved research project, or stored in the HBRC until required.
- Samples may be released for genetic studies, but only to research projects aimed at providing clues to the nature of disease, or if it is already known that genes are important.
- Samples may also be used to support ethically approved biomedical research which uses animals, but only when this is absolutely necessary and experiments cannot be performed in any other way. Animal models can be invaluable for increasing our understanding of disease and advancing treatments.
- Sometimes scientists need to grow cells in a culture dish for a long time and again, this type of approach can be invaluable for biomedical research.
- All information about you will remain confidential and will be stored in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 2018.
- No information will ever be released to an insurance company, used to sell you anything, or given to other organisations except for the purposes of biomedical research.
- Scientists receiving your samples will **NOT** be provided with any personal information such as your name, address or phone number. The information received will relate to your disease, treatment and medical history only and **NOT** your identity.
- Your samples and associated information from your health records will be used mainly by local scientists, but they may also be made available to scientists outside of Birmingham, elsewhere in the UK or overseas. Scientists may

work in universities, hospitals or private/commercial companies that carry out biomedical research. Commercial collaborations are vital for the development of suitable drugs and treatments.

- You will not receive any personal financial reward for your donation, and the samples you have gifted will never be 'sold' for profit. However, we will ask scientists to cover some of the costs incurred in sample collection and storage.
- Participation in the HBRC is 'enduring', i.e. we can request donations from you until you withdraw. This does **NOT** mean that you must donate at every hospital visit – just that there is no need for you to re-consent at every visit. However, if you lose mental capacity in the future, we will expect someone to inform us, so that you or a 'consultee' can advise us whether your existing samples and associated information should be destroyed or retained.

Do you have to agree?

NOT AT ALL. It is entirely up to you. You do not have to donate a sample or give a reason for choosing not to. Your decision will not affect your care or treatment in any way, now or in the future.

What happens if you change your mind?

- You can withdraw consent at any time by contacting your hospital doctor or the HBRC directly (details below). You do not have to give a reason why.
- If you tell us you have changed your mind, this will not affect your care or treatment in any way, now or in the future. All samples held in the HBRC will be destroyed in the way human samples are normally destroyed by hospitals. Similarly, any information we store about you will be deleted (apart from records allowing us to trace your samples' history). We will contact any research groups and ensure that any unused samples and associated information are destroyed.
- If you change your mind after a long period of time, the samples and associated information may already have been used. Unfortunately, we cannot recall samples or associated information from scientists if this is the case.

What are the benefits to you or your baby?

- It is unlikely that there will be any direct benefit to you or your baby, since it takes many years for research to produce advances in the way diseases are diagnosed, treated, or prevented. You can benefit from the knowledge that research will make faster progress if more human samples are studied, and you are personally contributing to this.
- Cord blood donated to the HBRC will **NOT** be used to generate stem cells suitable for the treatment of diseases in yourself, or your children, later in life.

What are the risks to you or your baby?

- Because the placenta and cord are collected after the baby is born, there are **NO** health risks to your health or your baby's arising from donation. The tissue will only be taken when the midwife or the clinical staff attending the birth say it is safe to do so. The placenta and umbilical cord would normally be discarded.
- As far as we know there are **NO** increased risks to your health from donating samples of your own blood to the HBRC. Samples will only be collected when it is safe to do so during your routine hospital visits. The identity of you and your baby will remain confidential, and when we provide samples to scientists, they will be obliged to use the samples only for the research declared in their ethical approval. They will be bound by a strict agreement to ensure this.

Can you find out the results?

- The development of reliable new clinical tests takes many years, so the HBRC will not routinely report individual research results. You can find out more generally about the types of research projects using your samples by contacting us using the details below. You can also ask to visit us the same way.
- If a research project using your samples generates clinically important information, then your doctor, or another member of your healthcare team, will contact you about this. They may wish to discuss how the information could be guide treatment for your current condition or for other conditions (possibly hereditary) which may affect you and your family.

Our contact details

The General Manager, Human Biomaterials Resource Centre, College of Medicine and Health, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT (07584 312396; hbrc-tissuebank@contacts.bham.ac.uk).

If you have a concern or complaint about the HBRC, please contact the Research Ethics Governance & Integrity Team, College of Medicine and Health, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT (researchgovernance@contacts.bham.ac.uk).