

## Pathology

# Human tissue samples

If any of the body tissue, cells or fluids removed during the management of my condition are not essential for the diagnosis, or would otherwise be discarded as waste, then

(Please initial as appropriate)  I AGREE to their use for teaching or research purposes, as described in the notes to patients section of this form.

I DISAGREE

Patient's signature .....Date.....

Name (PRINT) .....

## Helping you decide

You will undergo various tests while you are under the hospital's care. These help to diagnose your illness and assess the effectiveness of any treatment. You may have tissue samples taken for diagnosis (a biopsy) or during an operation to remove the diseased tissue.

This information explains more about these tissue samples and why we ask if we can keep and store them. It'll help you decide if you want to give your consent (permission). You can also get advice from the hospital doctor or nurse caring for you.

## What is a tissue sample?

The human body is made of cells that form tissues such as skin or body organs such as the lungs. Tissue samples consist of cells taken from these tissues or body organs.



## Patient Information

You will already be familiar with blood taken for testing. This is a type of tissue sample. However, taking a tissue sample can also involve taking a small sample of a tissue called a biopsy, or removing part or all of an organ.

### **Why do we take tissue samples?**

We take small tissue samples (biopsies) to help diagnose you. An example would be a needle biopsy of the liver taken to diagnose suspected liver disease. Or a breast biopsy to check whether a breast lump is harmless or requires surgery.

In other situations, taking a tissue sample is part of treating the disease. An example of this would be the surgical removal of a cancer. In this case, examining the tissue removed will allow a better assessment of the next treatment steps after surgery.

We may also take a tissue sample to assess how a patient responds to treatment.

### **What happens to tissue samples?**

Tissue samples are turned into tissue blocks. This is so pathology staff can cut very thin slices of the tissue block and place these onto glass slides. The slides are then examined under a microscope.

For small samples, the whole biopsy will be used in this process. For large samples, such as a body organ removed for cancer, the doctor will check small portions from the organ under the microscope.

After examining the tissue, a report is prepared for your doctor. This report details the findings and advises them on further treatment.

### **Who examines the tissue?**

The tissue is selected and examined by a consultant pathologist. This is a doctor that specialises in the diagnosis of disease in the laboratory.

## **What happens to tissue samples when the examination is over?**

### **Blood and body fluids**

These are usually only kept a few days after a report is completed. After this, they are disposed of as clinical waste.

### **Solid tissue from organs or biopsies**

Solid tissue left over is kept for about 4-6 weeks once the report from the pathologist is complete. This tissue is then incinerated in clinical waste.

### **Foetal tissue**

The wishes of the parents will be adhered to. If parents do not wish to make a decision on foetal tissue, the samples are disposed of by communal burial.

## **Why do you keep tissue blocks and slides?**

Hospitals worldwide keep the blocks and slides prepared from the biopsies. This is because:

- They form part of the patient's medical record.
- They can be used as a reference to see how treatment progresses.
- They can be used as a reference to decide if a patient has developed a new disease.
- They can be used in the future to assess if a patient is suitable for a new treatment that was not available when the diagnosis was first made.
- They may be needed for assessment if the patient has contracted the disease because of their job.
- They can be used to check the quality of the work carried out by the laboratory staff. This helps to maintain high standards.
- They can be used in education and training.

## Patient Information

### **Use for research**

Leftover tissue, tissue blocks and slides can be valuable research material. The consent form records your consent for any material surplus from diagnosis being used for research.

The material is used on a 'linked anonymised' basis unless you state you do not want it to be used in this way. 'Linked anonymised' means that researchers who want to use your tissue cannot identify you from your samples.

Only authorised staff within Pathology, with password-protected access to secure databases, will be able to identify you as an individual. This is done using a unique identifying number given to each sample.

Specific details of your treatment or pathological condition may be passed on if relevant to a researcher. This would again be anonymised, unless you have given explicit consent for your details to be shared with research groups.

It is extremely rare for a doctor to take a tissue sample just for research. You would need to give separate consent for this to happen. If the tissue is used for a specific research project where your identity is needed, you will be asked to consent to that research.

### **How are the tissue blocks and slides stored?**

They are kept in secure conditions, usually within the pathology laboratory.

### **Is this tissue used for transplantation?**

No. The National Blood Transfusion Service Tissue collects tissue for transplantation. This has a separate consent process.

## **Do I need to consent for tissue to be taken or stored?**

Yes. You should do this when you consent to any test involving a tissue biopsy or removing tissue during surgery. Your consent covers:

- making the tissue blocks and slides
- storing the tissue blocks and slides as part of your medical record
- using the tissue blocks and slides for quality assurance, training staff and audit

You may be asked if left over tissue can be used for teaching or research. In this case, the material and any related clinical information the researcher uses will be anonymised. The material will only be traceable to you by hospital staff, not the researcher.

## **What if I refuse?**

You can object to any or all non-diagnostic uses. This is your decision. Ask to speak to your doctor if you have questions or concerns. Alternatively, you may speak to the Clinical Director of Pathology about the storage of tissue, blood and slides.

The researcher will have access to a summary of medical information needed to explain the tissue. It will not be possible for the researcher to identify and link you to the tissue.

If you wish to object to tissue being kept or used for research, you should contact:

Clinical Director of Pathology  
Pathology Department, UHCW NHS Trust  
Coventry  
CV2 2DX

Tel 024 7696 8649

Fax 024 7696 5441

Email: [uhc-tr.Pathology-Secretaries@nhs.net](mailto:uhc-tr.Pathology-Secretaries@nhs.net)

## Further information

Royal College of Pathologists website: [www.rcpath.org](http://www.rcpath.org)

Human Tissue Authority website: [www.hta.gov.uk](http://www.hta.gov.uk)

The Human Tissue Act

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/30/contents>

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 7667 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

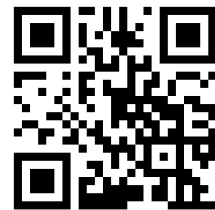
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### Document History

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