



GIVE THE GIFT OF **HOPE**

You can help researchers find future cures by donating your tissue, blood and other samples.

BE A TISSUE DONOR

Do you know that you can play a role in advancing medicine by donating your excess and/or biological samples, such as blood and tissues, for medical research?

Medical researchers use your donation to find new and better treatments for medical diseases and conditions. Before you make the decision to donate, it is important to understand what tissue donation is, how it works, and how your consent plays a part.

UNDERSTANDING TISSUE DONATION

Donated tissue is sourced from the extra and excess biological samples of patients. In clinics or operating rooms, doctors remove parts of organs or tissues required for clinical diagnosis or medical treatment. After analysis of these tissues for diagnosis is completed, excess biological samples will be considered leftover and could be made available for tissue donation.

With your consent, your samples may be donated to either the SingHealth Tissue Repository (STR) or other tissue banks within SingHealth for the purpose of future medical research.





WHAT ARE BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES?

Biological samples refer to any biological materials obtained from the human body that consists of or includes human cells. This includes organic tissues, blood, and bodily fluids.

WHO CAN DONATE?

Any patient from the hospital or clinic may choose to donate samples that are collected during a medical procedure for future research purposes. No additional procedure is required and the entire process should not add to your inconvenience or cause you unnecessary harm.

WHY SHOULD I DONATE?

Tissue donation for research is a generous and noble act. Researchers can use these samples to better understand diseases and develop new cures for them.

HOW DO I DONATE?

Ask your doctor or nurse what samples you may be able to donate. There are two ways you may donate.

1. You may choose to donate **leftover samples** that are collected during a medical procedure by your doctor for diagnostic or treatment purposes. Often parts of your samples remain after your doctor

has decided they are no longer necessary for tests or your treatment. These samples are usually destroyed. But if you give consent, samples that aren't needed for your medical care can be used for research. You will not need to have an additional procedure for this type of donation.

2. Or, you may choose to donate **extra samples** through a procedure not related to your medical care, such as an additional blood specimen draw, for the purpose of research only.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I DONATE MY SAMPLE?

Tissue samples collected will be used first and foremost to complete your medical diagnosis and treatment. With your consent, tissue samples are then stored in a "biobank" that preserves them for studies now and in the future.

HOW ARE MY DONATED SAMPLES USED IN RESEARCH?

Researchers use samples of tissue, blood and/or bodily fluids to better understand the nature of diseases, and to evaluate new drugs and diagnostic tests before they are used in human clinical trials.

TISSUE DONATION PROCESS & ITS IMPACT

Before treatment, you will be asked if you would like to donate your tissue samples.

01



The removed tissue samples are then sent to diagnostics lab for further testing.

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02

The doctor removes the tissues samples during your procedure.



04

Your doctor draws on this information to determine your treatment method.

Any leftover tissues samples are either destroyed or donated.

05



Researchers use donated tissue samples for research and development of drugs and treatments.

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Donated tissues samples are kept in the tissue repository for research.



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This leads to better prevention and treatment of diseases to benefit the community.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE SINGHEALTH TISSUE REPOSITORY?

The SingHealth Tissue Repository (STR) is the largest research tissue repository in Singapore. The core research platform facilitates the conduct of basic, translational and clinical research at SingHealth.

WHO CAN USE THE SAMPLES I DONATE?

Researchers of SingHealth and its partner institutions will have access to the donated tissue samples. Donated samples may also be exported overseas for research purposes with your consent.

ARE MY BIOLOGICAL MATERIALS REGULATED BY THE LAW?

Yes, the Human Biomedical Research Act (HBRA) regulates the conduct of human biomedical research and handling of human tissues. The Act sets out regulatory frameworks with the aim of protecting the safety and welfare of donors and patients. HBRA also regulates the conduct of human biomedical research which is more 'sensitive', for e.g. research involving human eggs or embryos, or human-animal combination embryos.

Research within SingHealth is also regulated by the Centralised Institutional Review Board (CIRB). This committee is appointed by the Research Institution and provides a central framework of ethical governance in human biomedical research. The primary responsibility of the CIRB is to ensure research is conducted ethically and that the safety, dignity and welfare of human research subjects are protected.

WILL I BE CONTACTED IN THE FUTURE?

If there are additional tests to be done to the donated samples which require your permission, you will be contacted for a re-consent request.

HOW LONG WILL MY DONATED BIOLOGICAL MATERIALS BE KEPT WITHIN STR?

Your donated biological materials will be kept for an extended period of time under suitable conditions. However, quality assurance will be performed before specimen is actually used for research.



CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THE TISSUE DONATION?

Yes, simply drop us an email or call for withdrawal requests. Note that we can only withdraw your donation if your tissues have yet to be used in research; you opted to be individually identified; or if it is deemed impractical to continue using your donations in research.

WILL I BENEFIT FROM RESEARCH, OR RECEIVE RESULTS ON MY SAMPLE?

Donating your tissue sample is wholly voluntary and treated as a gift. You should not expect any personal or medical gain from your donation. You will only receive the results from your medical tests.

Researchers will not have access to information that identifies you therefore research findings will not be provided to you. The only exception to this rule will be in the case of incidental findings*.

* *Incidental findings are potentially harmful findings identified during research. As these findings may pose significant risk(s) to the research subject, we may attempt to re-identify the donor in order to inform them.*

WILL MY DECISION AFFECT MY MEDICAL CARE IN ANY WAY?

Donating leftover or extra tissue samples is entirely voluntary and will not affect the medical care you receive in any way. There are measures in place to protect your privacy.

WILL MY INFORMATION REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL?

Any personal information collected at the time you donate your biological samples will be kept in a biobank is a highly secure environment that can only be accessed by a limited number of authorised staff. Biobanks are not allowed to release your personal information without your consent.

Researchers will not know whose biological samples they receive nor request for a specific individual's tissue sample.

DOES MY DOCTOR KNOW ABOUT THIS?

Yes, your doctor is aware that the tissue repository would like to store your leftover and/or extra tissue samples. This does not mean that it is an obligation to donate. The choice to donate is yours.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further queries or feedback, you may contact us at:

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