

Asking for the return of your tissue samples

Cellular Pathology

Information for Patients

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This leaflet is for patients who have asked for the return of samples of their tissue after the lab has finished testing. You must take care of any material that is returned to you. It may be important for your own health care or that of your family in the future.

Tissue samples can be taken from any part of the body like, the skin, bowels, lungs. They are either used to help us decide what is wrong with you (a biopsy) or to remove the area affected as part of your treatment (a resection or excision).

What has happened to my tissue sample in the lab?

When your sample is taken it is sent to the lab in a solution called "formalin" to keep it. It is carefully checked and small pieces are taken for testing. These pieces of tissue are made into wax blocks which are attached to small plastic cassettes. The amount of tissue in each block can vary, from a tiny bits the size of a pin head up to a piece the size of a postage stamp. Putting tissue into wax blocks allows us to cut very thin sections which are dyed and placed on glass slides so they can be seen using a microscope.

What form will my tissue be in?

When the lab has finished with your sample, there are 3 types of material that may be left:

- tissue in formalin
- wax blocks
- glass slides

You will be told exactly what we have in your case.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Tissue in formalin

Formalin kills bacteria and viruses, there is very little chance of infection from the sample, but formalin is a chemical and may burn your skin, make your eyes sting, cause your nose to run, and in some cases, affect your breathing.

We do our best to remove the formalin and will give the sample to you in a sealed bag. If you need to take the tissue out of the sealed bag you **must** wear disposable gloves and open in a well ventilated area.

If the sample is small, for example a biopsy, then no tissue will be left. If the sample is larger then the left over tissue is normally disposed of (got rid of) by burning (incineration) a few weeks after all the tests have been done. If you take away tissue that was due to be incinerated it will not affect your future care.

Wax blocks

Wax blocks are stored in the lab archive for **30 years**. This means that if there are changes in your medical condition or advances in medical science in the future that could help you or your family we can look at them again and do more tests .

If you do choose to take the wax blocks you should look after them carefully, in case future tests are needed. Keeping them in a cool, dark place is advisable as the wax will melt if it gets too hot.

Glass slides

Glass slides are kept in the lab archive for **30 years**. This means that we can look at them again to help your treatment in the future if we need to. They are also a record of exactly what was checked to make your diagnosis. This can be **important** if a mistake is suspected and as evidence if cases go to court.

Why are the blocks and slides important to my health care in the future?

This will depend on the what your medical condition is. Your doctor will be able to tell you. In general, for conditions where you recover completely (such as appendicitis) it is not likely that a review or further work will be needed. But, if your condition is likely to happen again to you or may affect other family members (some cancers run in families) or if it is something you have to live with (such as ulcerative colitis), it is possible that the slides will be looked at again. You need to be aware that if you take the blocks and slides and lose them we will not be able to do any other tests. This could mean that your future medical treatment might not be right for your condition.

Sometimes blocks and slides in our archive can be very useful for teaching or for research. The Human Tissue Act (2004) covers this. Any research projects have to be approved by a Research Ethics Committee. Care is always taken not to reveal patient details. There are some circumstances where we can use samples without your consent, but you can ask us not to and this will be respected.

Can I cremate or bury my tissue, blocks and slides?

- If you wish to cremate or bury the tissue, blocks or slides we have returned to you, please contact the Bereavement Services Manager, Leicester City Council Cemeteries Office, Gilroes Crematorium, Groby Road, Leicester LE3 9QT on 0116 454 4925 for advice as there are laws that you need to comply with.
- There is a separate process for tissue after the loss of a pregnancy. This is in line with your wishes as given on the Pregnancy Loss and Consent Form.
- If you wish to cremate or bury this tissue you will also need a Hospital or Private Fetal Burial Form available from the Leicester Royal Infirmary Bereavement Services.

Contact

Cellular Pathology: 0116 258 6582

Leicester Royal Infirmary Bereavement Services: 0116 258 5194 or 0116 258 5196

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

જે તુમીં ઇચ જાજવારી વિમે હેર જામ્ના વિચિ ચાહુંદે હે, ઝાં વિરખા વરવે હેઠાં સિંઝે ગાદે નંબર 'ઝે ટેલીફોન વરે।
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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