

DNA Storage

Saving your DNA for the Future



This leaflet is based, with permission,
on a leaflet produced by:

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Genetics Service

Birmingham Women's and
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An information leaflet
for individuals with
a personal and/or
family history of cancer



ST. JAMES'S
HOSPITAL

Why have I been given this leaflet?

You may have been given this leaflet because you have been referred to the Cancer Genetics Service with a family history of cancer. Alternatively, one of your relatives may have been seen by the Cancer Genetics Service and suggested you would be willing to provide a DNA sample for storage

What is DNA storage?

DNA is the substance that contains all your genetic information, also known as genes. You inherit these genes from your parents and you pass them on to your children. DNA storage allows you to store some of your genetic material in case genetic testing can be offered in the future. We take a small sample of your blood and send it to our Genetics Laboratory. They remove the DNA from your blood and keep it in safe storage.

What is the purpose of DNA storage?

DNA storage provides families with the chance to pursue genetic testing sometime in the future. Genetic testing involves looking at DNA for gene alterations (similar to a spelling mistake or change in the gene's instruction). These gene alterations may mean some members of the family could have an increased risk of developing cancer.

Who do we offer DNA storage to?

DNA storage is usually offered to individuals who have had cancer. This may be because no genetic test can be offered at present. It allows the family to take advantage of future advances in genetic testing. We also offer DNA storage if a full clinical assessment is not possible. This might be because a family member is seriously ill or having treatment. Storage ensures a sample of DNA is available for future testing which may help the rest of the family. The family can then focus on their relative's care or treatment, and defer any decisions about testing until the family is ready. Some individuals choose to store DNA and consider genetic testing at some point in the future to help their relatives.

Where will my DNA be stored?

Your DNA sample will be stored in the Molecular Genetics Laboratory, Department of Clinical Genetics, Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin, Dublin 12.

Who may use my stored DNA?

Only you or your nominated next of kin will be able to request the sample is tested. It may be used for tests requested by you, or by your relatives in the event of your death. You will have an opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of testing before making any decisions.

What happens now?

If you have been given a consent form with this leaflet and wish to store DNA you need to sign and return the consent form to the address on your letter. You will also have been sent a form to have a blood sample taken at your GP or local hospital. If you are having other blood samples taken, you could have this done at the same time. Your hospital or GP can send the blood sample to the Molecular Genetics Laboratory, Department of Clinical Genetics, Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin, Dublin 12. We may have included some packaging to make this easier.

If you are currently having chemotherapy, if possible it would be better to have the sample taken at least four weeks after your treatment has finished. This will give your white blood cells a chance to recover. If this is not possible, please let us know and we can highlight on your blood test form that you are currently undergoing treatment.

If you have received a DNA storage pack and do not wish to store DNA, please let us know so we can update our records. If you have received this leaflet on its own and wish to store DNA please contact us on the telephone number at the end of the leaflet so we can send you the appropriate forms.