

**HOW CAN YOU SPEED UP CANCER RESEARCH DISCOVERIES  
FOR YOU, YOUR FAMILIA, AND YOUR COMMUNITY?**

# ✓ **Donate Biospecimens!**



## **What are Biospecimens?**

Biospecimens are samples taken from the human body, such as tissues (hair, skin, organs) or fluids (blood, urine, saliva).

These samples contain cellular, molecular, and chemical information. They also will have associated demographics (age, sex, race/ethnicity) and details about a donor's lifetime environmental exposures (diet, tobacco use, sunlight, toxic chemicals, infectious agents, etc.). Protecting the privacy of this personal information is a priority.



## **What Can Biospecimens Do for Research?**

Biospecimens are often the source of new ways to prevent, diagnose, or treat cancer and other diseases. Answering complex medical research questions often demands analysis of hundreds or thousands of biospecimens, both from healthy patients as well as those with a specific medical condition.

# Why Do Researchers Need Biospecimen Donations from Different Racial/Ethnic Groups?

Some people have a higher risk of certain types of cancer based on their race/ethnicity.

For example, Latinos have higher risk of liver, cervical, and stomach cancer than their peers. Differences in cancer risk and outcomes may be due to genetics, culture, lifestyle, or behaviors. To understand why, researchers need biospecimens from men and women of different ages and racial and ethnic backgrounds.



## How Are Biospecimens Collected, Stored?

Patients can decide to donate their biospecimens.

Biospecimens are collected and housed in a biorepository or biobank, a facility that collects, catalogs, and stores samples for laboratory research. Biobanking is the field of science that supports many types of contemporary research, like genomics and personalized medicine.



Katherine Briant, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

## How Exactly Do You Donate Biospecimens?

Ask your doctor or nurse about options for donating a biospecimen. Someone at your treatment center may ask you to consider donating.

Donors' personal/medical info accompanies samples. However, protecting the privacy of this personal information is a biobank's priority.



Robert Hood: Fred Hutch News Service

**TO DONATE: CONTACT THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE'S  
BIOREPOSITORIES AND BIOSPECIMEN RESEARCH BRANCH**

**E-MAIL: [NCIBBRB@NIH.GOV](mailto:NCIBBRB@NIH.GOV)**

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