



UNIVERSITY of
TASMANIA

MENZIES
Institute for Medical Research

Tasmanian Ophthalmic Biobank



Supporting research into causes
and treatments for eye diseases

Menzies Institute for Medical Research

menzies.utas.edu.au



What is the Tasmanian Ophthalmic Biobank?

The Tasmanian Ophthalmic Biobank (TOB) is an initiative of the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, University of Tasmania and participating clinics.

It aims to collect blood and clinical information from people with eye disease and those with healthy eyes.

Through the project, researchers aim to:

- Prevent and screen for eye disease
- Better understand eye disease
- Develop new treatments for eye disease
- Predict an individual's risk of developing eye disease
- Develop a greater understanding of diseases like cardiovascular disease and diabetes and their impact on the eye and vision.

Who will use the Biobank?

The Biobank is a resource for eye researchers within Australia and overseas.

Researchers are required to have approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee and apply to the Biobank committee. Both of these committees decide if the study meets Australian ethical and privacy standards.



Sometimes research will lead to findings that result in the development of a commercial test or treatment that may be overseen by pharmaceutical companies. Australian law indicates that there is no financial reward or payment to you in such an event. TOB reinvests any benefits it receives into medical research.

What do we ask of you?

- Donate approximately 40ml of blood for research purposes. You do not have to fast.
- Grant permission to access your identified health information relevant to eye research. Information may originate from the Royal Hobart Hospital, private eye doctors, local GPs, Medicare or the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. We will also request information about your family history of eye disease.
- As blood samples can degrade over the years, in the future we may ask you for another blood sample or to undertake a questionnaire for a specific study. This is entirely optional.
- For some conditions we may also discuss the possible collection of urine, stool or discarded surgical specimens.

Participation will take approximately 30 minutes.

What will be done with your sample?

During the next year(s), your stored sample will be analysed for approved eye research.

Researchers will analyse your blood sample, including the genetic information (DNA) contained in your blood cells. This and the information in your medical records will enable researchers to learn how your genes relate to your eye condition and your general health.

It is also possible that your sample may be tested by researchers in ways that are currently unknown.

How will we look after your information?

Your sample and clinical information will be held in strict confidence at all times and labelled with a unique study code.

Only Biobank staff will be able to link this code to your medical records. Research staff will not be able to identify you as an individual.

What will NOT be done?

Your blood sample will NOT be used for research involving reproductive technology, human embryos or cloning. No sample or health information will be released to a third party unless it is to carry out research that has been approved by a Human Research Ethics Committee.

Information will only be disclosed with your permission, except as required by law.

What are the benefits?

In the short term, there will not be any direct benefit. However by participating in this research you are making a direct contribution to research that has the potential to minimise vision loss and blindness for others in the future.

What are the risks?

Some people experience bruising or feel faint after giving blood. To minimise these risks, all procedures will be carried out by qualified staff. Your welfare is our priority.

It is possible that future studies may learn new information about eye disease or potentially other diseases that you carry. Some of this information may have implications for yourself, and your family including children.

Will I be told results?

Overall research results will be published in scientific journals and participants will be provided with a newsletter.

You will not be told individual results, however any research information thought to be of relevance to your eye, general or reproductive health will be carefully examined by an appropriate team of ethical and medical advisors.

Where there is clear evidence of information of medical importance to you or your family we will do our best to contact you so that you can decide if you want to learn more about that information. Please inform us if you change your contact details.

Research results need to be verified in an approved laboratory. This may be of benefit, but it may also pose a risk to your ability to obtain new life, trauma, and disability insurance. We will provide you with information and genetic counselling beforehand.

Informed consent

We ask that you give careful consideration to the information set out in this brochure before providing consent. If you decide to donate samples, it is advisable that you consider informing family members.

Participation in any project is voluntary. Your medical care will not be affected in any way by your decision.



What if I change my mind?

The blood and clinical information you provide will be stored until it is used or until you contact the Biobank to request it be destroyed.

If you wish to have your sample withdrawn from the Biobank, wish to stop the Biobank accessing your medical records or request no further contact, you need to notify the Biobank in writing.

Will I be reimbursed?

You will not be paid for your participation in this project.

Future contact

We ask you to indicate in the “consent to participate” section if you would be happy to be contacted again by the Biobank project about any kind of research or donating a further sample.

For further information or if you have any problems concerning the project contact the Tasmanian Ophthalmic BioBank on (03) 6226 4731 or email eye.tob@utas.edu.au

Other issues

For independent advice or if you have any complaints about any aspects of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant then you may contact the Human Research and Ethics Committee Tasmania on (03) 6226 7479.

Contact us

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