



HEALTH RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

AN INFORMATION BOOKLET FOR BLOOD DONORS



About this booklet

This booklet is to inform blood donors about the IBTS health research and development programme.

At the IBTS, we are responsible for the national blood supply. This includes processing your donation to make blood products such as red and white blood cells, platelets and plasma. Did you know that a part of your donation remains following the production process and this is a vital resource for health science researchers across Ireland? You may already be somewhat aware of this from the section entitled Use of Blood Components and Samples for Research and Development in the donation information leaflet, given when you attend clinic.

This booklet explains in more detail the research we undertake and provides some examples. The IBTS is the only source of cells and other blood components, collected from healthy individuals, in Ireland. Therefore, your donation, through research, also helps to advance science and medicine for future generations.

We thank you for giving blood enabling us to save lives.

Types of research and development projects

Our health research and development projects include the following:

- **Audits or checks on our services**
We ask the question - Do our services meet international standards?
- **Service evaluation**
We ask the question - What factors impact how we deliver our services?
- **Public Health**
We ask the question - What are the health issues for our donors and what can we learn from them?
- **Health Research**
We try to answer research questions about blood donation, transfusion and other health-related areas of interest. This may involve collecting information or carrying out testing in addition to our everyday services.



IBTS Values

- **Strive for excellence**

Use the minimum information required to complete our research and development projects.

- **Lead by example**

We are open and transparent in all our research activities. We are accountable for our actions and decisions from the start to the finish of a project.

- **Love our donors**

We respect one another, the research process and hold our donors and the products we work with in the highest regard.

- **Improve patients' lives together**

We work with clinical and academic colleagues to ensure the best research outcomes.

How we protect your data

For research purposes,

We will always:

- Use the minimum information needed to carry out health research and service developments.
- Train our staff on data protection and research integrity.
- Ask for your explicit consent to use your personal data in our health research. Explicit consent means we will fully inform you of how we plan to use any data that could identify you, so you can decide if we can use it. You can give consent in writing with a signed consent form or online.
- Maintain your personal data or blood products for research purposes within the IBTS, unless your explicit consent is given to transfer your data.

Please refer to the IBTS Data Protection Booklet for information on how the IBTS handles personal data, including information about research and development, data collection, storage, and sharing practices. If you have any doubt about how we process your personal information or you want to exercise your data protection rights, please email our Data Protection Officer at dpo@ibts.ie.



Specific examples of research projects

Below are examples of research projects which show how donations contribute to our work.

Public Health Research

- Estimate level of antibodies (disease-fighting proteins) in donors' blood. This helps us understand outbreaks of disease, and immune response to infection and vaccination.
- Identify the blood groups, and other blood associated proteins in donors to investigate if there are any specific groups associated with disease risk.
- Contribute to clinical trials to help treat patients.

Service Evaluation

- Analyse donor health and lifestyle behaviours for trends, such as donor travel or other high-risk activities.
- Evaluate donor recruitment methods to ensure our donor population reflects the general Irish population.
- Find the best approach to match donor blood groups for people who need multiple transfusions, such as more detailed genetic testing.
- Compare iron levels in donors to evaluate the impact of repeated donation on donor health.
- Evaluate blood components stored under different conditions.



Academic Health-related research

Use donated material that cannot be transfused to patients

- to understand how our immune system fights disease
- to develop methods to 'grow' cells in the laboratory

Clinical Audit

- Review any negative reactions after a transfusion.
- Review transfusion outcomes in those with rare blood groups, especially during pregnancy.

Legislation underpinning our research practices

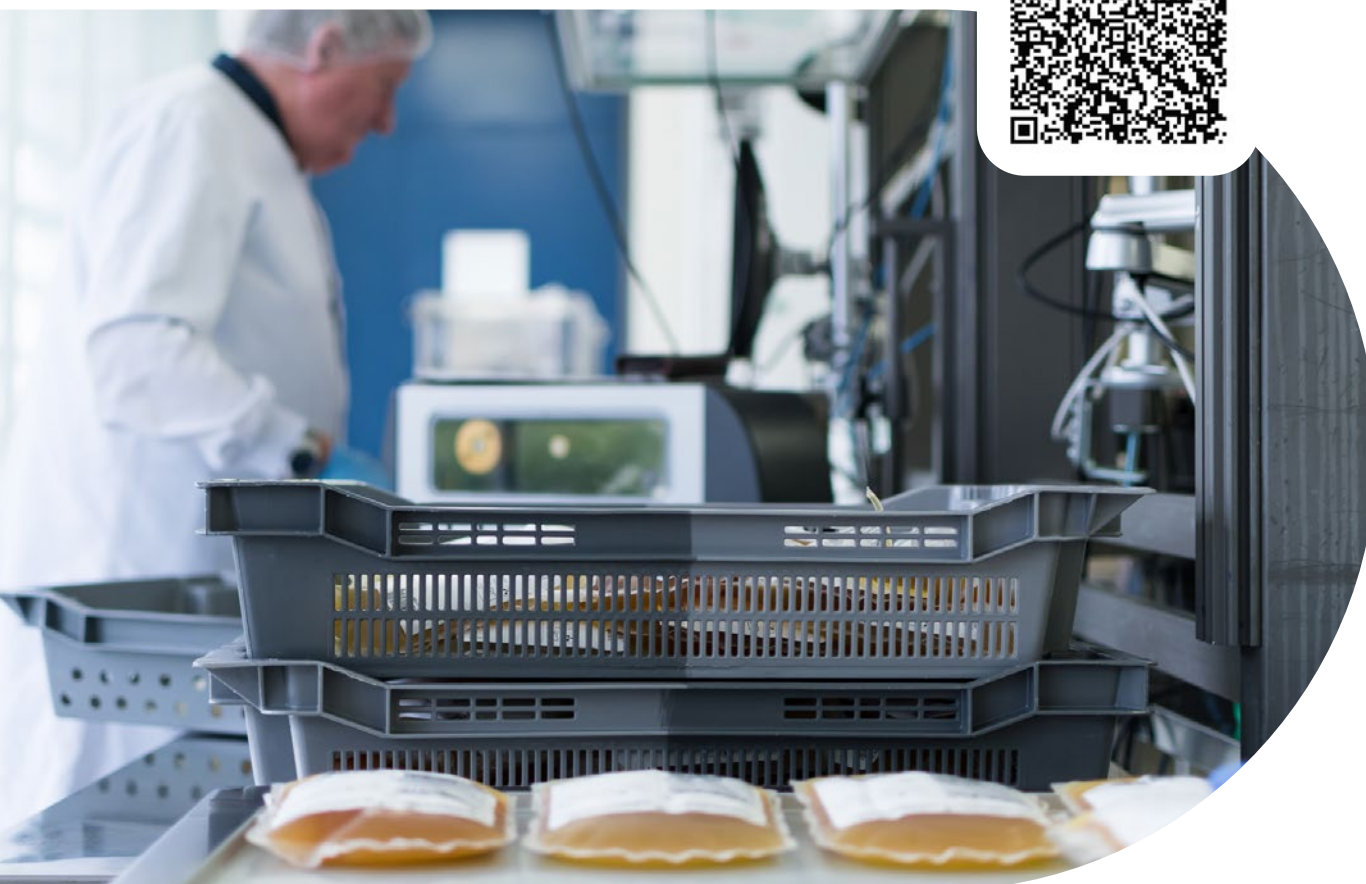
Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 209/1988 - Blood Transfusion Service Board (Establishment) (Amendment) Order, 1988:

We must 'organise, provide, assist or encourage research and the training and teaching of persons in matters relating to blood transfusion and preparation of blood products'.

S.I. No. 18/2021 - Data Protection Act 2018 (Section 36(2)) (Health Research) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 – 'Health Research Regulations'

S.I. No. 547/2006 - European Communities (Human Blood and Blood Components Traceability Requirements and Notification of Serious Adverse Reactions and Events) Regulations 2006

If you would like to receive regular updates about our research, please scan the QR code and complete the consent form enabling us to contact you.







Irish Blood Transfusion Service

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