

# MIA Biospecimen Bank

## Patient information

### What is a biospecimen bank?

A biospecimen bank (or biobank) is a place that collects biological samples, such as tissue, blood and other bodily fluids. The Melanoma Institute Australia (MIA) Biospecimen Bank collects:

- Tissue, blood and/or stool samples from healthy people who are undergoing routine skin checks or from patients diagnosed with melanoma or another skin cancers.
- Patient information, for example, your name, age and gender.
- Some details about your medical history.

### What is the purpose of a biospecimen bank?

A biospecimen bank provides researchers in Australia and overseas access to much-needed samples for vital research into the prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment of melanoma and other skin cancers. Researchers can only gain access to samples if their research study has been approved by an ethics committee.

### Why is the MIA Biospecimen Bank important?

The MIA Biospecimen Bank is important because we hope that the research YOU assist with could ultimately help future generations of Australians survive and beat melanoma and other skin cancers.

### Who can participate and what will participation mean for me?

You can participate if you are seeing an MIA clinician. If you choose to contribute to the MIA Biospecimen Bank, you may be asked to:

- Sign the 'Participant Consent Form'.
- Donate a small sample of cancer tissue if you are having (or have had) a biopsy or surgery (if appropriate, not mandatory).
- Donate a small amount of blood (if appropriate, not mandatory).
- Donate a stool sample (if appropriate, not mandatory).
- Provide access to information about your health that is relevant to your diagnosis and treatment.

## What is the process?

The opportunity to donate to the MIA Biospecimen Bank begins when you have an appointment with an MIA clinician.

If you elect to have a biopsy or surgery as part of your treatment, this involves removal of some or all the tumour, which the Pathologist then examines.

Usually, the Pathologist uses a small amount of tumour tissue for diagnostic purposes and discards any remaining tissue accordingly.

If you CHOOSE to be a donor, a small portion of tumour removed during your surgery is collected and stored by the MIA Biospecimen Bank.

Collection of this tumour sample will only occur after the Pathologist has all the information required to make your diagnosis. The MIA Biospecimen Bank will store samples securely and anonymously so they cannot be identified as having come from you.



The MIA Biospecimen Bank is the world's largest source of biological samples for research into melanoma and other skin cancers. Established in 1998 to collect and disseminate high-quality samples and information for research into melanoma, the Biospecimen Bank has been a significant contributor to advancing melanoma treatment and enabling scientific discoveries in the field of melanoma. This of course could not occur without MIA's generous participants who donate samples and play a significant role in MIA's mission of 'zero deaths from melanoma'.

## Did you know?

- The choice to donate is entirely up to YOU and whatever your decision; it will NOT affect your medical treatment or relationship with your health care team.
- There are NO physical risks additional to the risks of your biopsy or surgery.
- Biobanking is an internationally recognised important cancer research tool, supported by national and state funding, such as the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Office for Health and Medical Research NSW Health (OHMR).

If you have any questions about the MIA Biospecimen Bank, please feel free to contact:  
02 9911 7200 or [research@melanoma.org.au](mailto:research@melanoma.org.au)

**Please note: The information in this brochure is of a general nature and should not replace the advice of healthcare professionals. All care has been taken to ensure the information presented here is accurate at the time of publishing (August 2024).**

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