

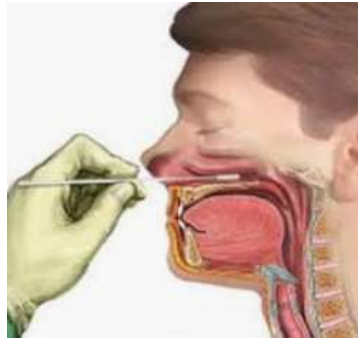
This information sheet is to update you on the measures we are taking in response to risks posed by Coronavirus/COVID-19. First and foremost, we want to ensure that we are taking every step to ensure the safety of our donors, our staff and our patients in response to a rapidly evolving situation, whilst still ensuring that we are able to continue to facilitate the supply of donor stem cells to patients who desperately need a life-saving stem cell transplant. You have either been identified as a potential match for a patient or you have been selected as the donor of choice for a patient and we want to reassure you of the measures we are taking to ensure your safety. We understand you might have concerns at this time, and we will do everything we can to answer your questions and put options in place to allow you either to be tested as a match or to donate stem cells safely.

If you have any further questions you can contact us to discuss but, in the meantime, we have compiled a list of FAQs that may address some of your immediate questions:

FAQs

KEY QUESTION

<p><i>What should I do if I start to show signs of coronavirus / COVID-19?</i></p>	<p>If you think you have symptoms of COVID-19 you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay at home and avoid close contact with other people https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/ • Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital • Use the NHS 111 online COVID-19 service to find out what to do next • If you are awaiting to have blood samples taken, attend a medical or donate your stem cells and start to feel unwell – you must notify BBMR (01179125729 or 01865 767892; if you call and no-one answers, please email BBMR@nhsbt.nhs.uk) <p>If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, we will defer you for up to 90 days from recovery. In certain cases, where there is no suitable alternative, you may be asked to donate before this time has passed. This will be determined on a case by case basis, based on your health, an assessment from our Medical Officer and the requirements of the patient’s medical team.</p>
<p><i>Is COVID-19 vaccination important in regard to stem cell donation?</i></p>	<p>You are encouraged to take up any offer of an NHS provided COVID-19 vaccination (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/). We will ask you about any COVID-19 vaccine doses you have already received or any you are scheduled to have in the future. We will also ask which type of COVID-19 vaccine you have been given. As a precaution for all stem cell donors, we will ensure you do not have any stem cell stimulating injections or donate stem cells for at least one week after you receive either your 1st or 2nd COVID-19 vaccine dose.</p>
<p><i>Will you screen me for COVID-19?</i></p>	<p>BBMR and its partners will use a screening questionnaire to review any symptoms or COVID-19 vaccinations you may have, at multiple time points including on the day of donation and it is important to be honest to avoid spreading COVID-19 or risking</p>

	<p>your health. If we detect and therefore suspect that you have had recent relevant symptoms using the questionnaire, we may ask you to follow current public health precautions such as requesting you to self-isolate.</p>
<p><i>Will I be tested for Coronavirus / COVID-19?</i></p>	<p>Yes multiple times, but only if you are selected as a final donor. If you are selected, you will be tested for the detection of the virus's nucleic acid to see if you have an active infection. You will have an upper respiratory sample taken at one of our clinics, and again on the day of donation if you pass the medical. The sampling might include a throat and nose swab or a nasopharyngeal swab where the swab is pushed deep up your nose and rotated. Either swabbing method might cause some temporary discomfort.</p>  <p>We may also ask for an extra blood sample on the day of donation to detect if the virus is present in your blood. It is also possible we may send a nurse to your home to obtain a swab to test for the virus that causes COVID-19.</p> <p>You may be asked to additionally test yourself using a lateral flow device.</p> <p>You will still be tested even if you have been fully vaccinated.</p>
<p><i>Will I be told the result of my Coronavirus / COVID-19 test?</i></p>	<p>We will tell you if you test positive for Coronavirus / COVID-19 and ask you to follow any applicable public health guidance e.g. to self-isolate at home. If you have already donated your stem cells by the time we get your final test result back; it may be deemed your donation is unsuitable for transplantation and cannot be used.</p>
<p><i>Should I take any extra precautions?</i></p>	<p>It is essential you do all you can to stay healthy while you go through the processes to complete your stem cell donation and so please practice all the health advice given to you in the donor information. Even if you are fully vaccinated, after receiving this information sheet please continue to do all you can to stay free from infection i.e. continue social distancing, wearing masks in shops / during medical appointments, good hand hygiene, etc.</p> <p>Please keep up with these extra precautions until either we inform you will not be donating after all, or until two weeks after you have donated. We ask you to take these extra precautions even if you feel it goes beyond government advice.</p>

	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQCP7waTRWU&feature=youtu.be</p> <p>In addition, for the patient’s safety; we ask you to please self-isolate as best you can for the 14 days prior to your donation date, even if the government does not advise this for others (i.e. we will ask you to self-isolate even if you are healthy & the pandemic doesn’t appear as serious as it did previously)</p>
<p><i>Why do I have to continue taking extra precautions, even though the government doesn’t ask this of everyone else currently?</i></p>	<p>Even if you are fully vaccinated, you could still become asymptotically infectious and spread the virus. You could unintentionally then infect our staff (which is why we insist on you wearing a mask at appointments). There is also a theoretical possibility the COVID-19 virus could spread to the patient recipient through your stem cell donation. As the patients are immunocompromised due to their existing illness and because of how they are medicated, they would have no protection to fight off the infection even if they have previously been vaccinated.</p>

VERIFICATION / CONFIRMATORY TYPING

<p><i>Can I leave my house during a ‘lock down’ to give samples or attend medicals / collections centres</i></p>	<p>Giving blood samples and donating stem cells fits the definition of “Medical needs or caring for a vulnerable person” and so leaving the house to attend medicals and other activities related to donating your stem cells via BBMR are exempt from any national or local ‘stay at home’ / ‘lock down’ period. BBMR can provide you with a letter explaining the need for any travel you might need to make.</p>
<p><i>I’d prefer not to go to my GP at the moment because of the coronavirus / COVID-19 risk. What can I do?</i></p>	<p>Because of the coronavirus / COVID-19 risk, we understand that you might have concerns. If you do not wish to visit an NHS medical facility (such as a GP surgery or walk-in centre) to give blood samples, we can arrange for you to attend one of our blood donation clinics instead.</p> <p>Alternatively, BBMR can send someone to your home in order to collect the sample from you there. Otherwise, it’s possible for someone in your household, who is trained to take blood, to take the sample. This could be a nurse, GP or other trained healthcare professional</p>
<p><i>I don’t think that I want to donate at a UK hospital at the moment. Can I do it later?</i></p>	<p>All our UK collection centres are taking every precaution possible to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and it is important to note that in some of our centres the collection site is located separate to the main hospital areas with separate entrances. If you would prefer to wait until a later date, we understand and respect your decision. The delay may result in an alternative donor being selected, but we will let you know if you are still needed at a later date</p>

DONOR PROVISION AND FOLLOW UP

<p><i>Is the collection centre you are sending me to safe?</i></p>	<p>All our UK collection centres are taking every precaution possible to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. This includes the standard NHS and Public Health England recommendations that everyone should do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly wash hands thoroughly (for 20 seconds) with soap and water. • Wash hands when you get home or get to work. • Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. • Put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards. • Avoid close contact with people who are unwell. • Avoid touching your face if you're hands aren't clean. <p>We will ensure that we select a collection centre that is best located for your geographical preference. We have sites in Sheffield, Oxford, Bristol and a private hospital in London</p>
<p><i>What preventative measures are you taking to ensure that I'm not at risk of coronavirus / COVID-19?</i></p>	<p>In addition to the above measures, every healthcare professional you may encounter during your donation process will be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment, self-isolated when necessary and would have utilised risk assessments to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading. We will also provide you with a surgical mask to wear when you need to leave your house to attend donation related appointments. We ask you to please continue to wear a face mask in public places and when attending appointments associated with your stem cell donation, even during times this is not considered mandatory.</p>
<p><i>What preventative measures are you taking to ensure that I don't have coronavirus / COVID-19 before I donate?</i></p>	<p>Every donor will be assessed to determine if they are at risk of having COVID-19 before they donate. This will include a medical examination to make sure you are in good health and not showing any signs of COVID-19. The risk assessment will cover areas such as your contact with people showing possible symptoms. If selected as a final donor, you will also be tested for the virus that causes COVID-19.</p>
<p><i>What if I don't feel comfortable going ahead?</i></p>	<p>At BBMR the health, safety and wellbeing of our donors and patients is our priority. We will assess the risk of every donation. If you have concerns about donating, we will do everything we can to reassure you. If you don't want to go ahead with the donation for any reason, we understand and respect your decision. If you do not wish to proceed it is vital that we know this as soon as possible so other donors can be approached and to ensure the patient has not started preparative treatment. Withdrawal after the latter stage has serious consequences for the patient.</p>
<p><i>What if I have been to a risk area or someone, I know has been to a risk area?</i></p>	<p>Every donor will be assessed to determine if they are at risk of having COVID-19 before they donate. This will include a medical examination to make sure you are in good health and not showing any signs of COVID-19. The risk assessment will cover areas such as your contact with people showing possible symptoms. You will be asked to be tested for COVID-19 at your</p>

	<p>medical, and on the day of donation. If you are donating bone marrow, you will be also be tested a few days before admission.</p>
<p><i>I am willing to donate my stem cells, but I do not want to travel on public transport. Can I still donate?</i></p>	<p>We're very conscious of the current situation and the advice surrounding social distancing. If we feel that public transport is not the best option, we will look for alternatives. If you are uncomfortable travelling by public transport, we will work to find alternative methods of transport, where possible, to ensure the donation can still go ahead. We are also happy for donors to drive to donate as long as you wait for a period of time post donation, have a drink, walk around to ensure you feel recovered enough to drive home.</p>
<p><i>Will my donation definitely take place?</i></p>	<p>Donations are subject to cancellation should you become symptomatic or test positive for the virus that causes COVID-19, but also because the global pandemic is putting immense strain on transport channels and health services around the world.</p>
<p><i>Am I still able to take a companion with me to donate?</i></p>	<p>Despite the advice in the main BBMR donor guide informing you that you are able to have a chaperone / companion accompany you at certain appointments – unfortunately this is not possible during the COVID-19 pandemic and so we ask you to attend donation associated appointments on your own.</p>
<p><i>Should I wear a surgical mask during workup, travel and/or the donation itself?</i></p>	<p>We will provide you with a surgical mask. Currently, you must wear a face covering at all times on public transport or when attending a hospital as a visitor or outpatient. Hospitals will be able to provide a face covering in emergencies. If you can, you should also wear a face covering in other enclosed public spaces where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas. You should be prepared to remove your face covering if asked to do so by police officers and staff for the purposes of identification.</p> <p>Evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you. However, if you are infected but have not yet developed symptoms, it may provide some protection for others you come into close contact with.</p>
<p><i>Why am I asked for consent to cryo-preserve (freeze) my stem cells after donation?</i></p>	<p>When it comes to signing consent forms at your medical, there is a part where you are requested to consent to freezing your cells. Due to the current pandemic and difficulties getting your stem cell donation to where it is needed, we ask you to give this section particular thought as it will help the patient and the team looking after them if you consent and initial the associated consent box while at the clinic.</p> <p>C STATEMENT BY DONOR: STORAGE AND DISCARD OF CELLS</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> by initialling the box to the right, I agree to the following:</p> <p>For all stem cell donations, there is a chance that the cells will not be used if the patient's condition deteriorates after you have donated. The chance that your cells will not be used has increased due to the pandemic – this aspect will be discussed in more detail at your medical assessment and consent session.</p>

INF1522/3 – Stem Cell Donor Pandemic Information Sheet



Blood and Transplant

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<p><i>What if I have had contact with someone who has confirmed coronavirus / COVID-19 or who is self-isolating for possible coronavirus / COVID-19?</i></p>	<p>Every potential donor will be risk assessed before donating. This will include questions about your travel history and the people you have come into contact with recently. It is possible that you may be asked to be tested for COVID-19 at your medical and on or just before the day of donation. The result of this assessment may lead to us deferring your donation in the best interests of you and of the patient. If you have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, or somebody with symptoms, please let us know. We ask that you monitor your health closely for any developing symptoms before donation and in the two weeks following.</p>
<p><i>I'm worried about donating. Will I be at a higher risk of contracting coronavirus / COVID-19 after I've donated PBSC or bone marrow?</i></p>	<p>No, you will not be at a higher risk. The number of blood cells removed from your body during donation is only a fraction of what you have in total. You will still have plenty of cells left to maintain normal immunity post donation. In addition, your body will quickly regenerate the cells that have been lost within a few weeks. Therefore, there is no evidence that you are at any more risk of contracting COVID-19 as a consequence of donating.</p>
<p><i>I share a household with someone who is at greater risk of being severely affected by coronavirus / COVID-19. Can I still donate?</i></p>	<p>If you are sharing a household with a person who is at greater risk of experiencing more serious COVID-19 symptoms, you may be concerned about donating. There are several options in these cases. For example, we could pay for you to stay in a hotel for a time before you return home after stem cell donation. Please discuss your specific circumstances with us and we will do everything possible to address any concerns you might have.</p>

For any further queries, please contact the BBMR on 0117 9125729 (8am to 6pm Monday to Friday)
BBMR@nhsbt.nhs.uk