COVID-19 Biobanking

What is a biobank?

A biobank collects samples (e.g., blood) and information from patients or volunteers who choose to participate and stores them in a secure place(s) for use in future research.

The samples are divided into small tubes so that they can be used for more than one research project.

Researchers request samples from the biobank for their research. To be given the samples, they must show that their research is useful.
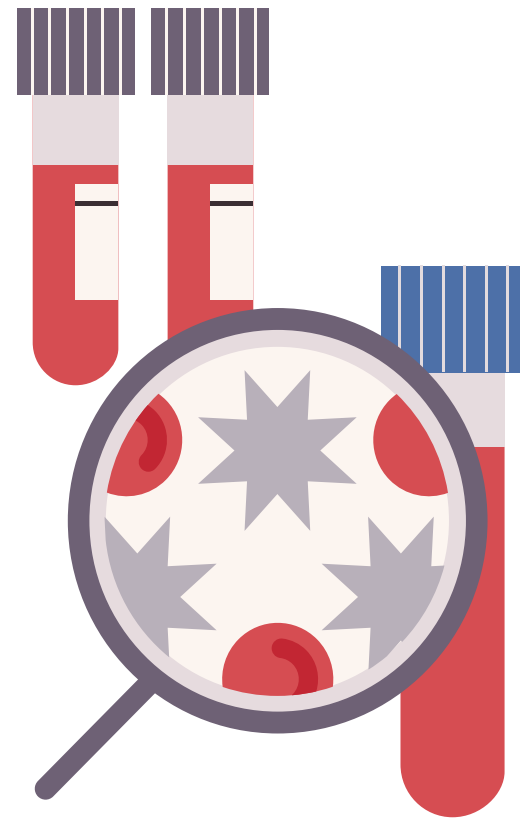
What is the BC COVID-19 Biobank Network?

The BC COVID-19 Biobank Network (often called the "Biobank Network") is a large biobank that has been set up at several sites in BC to support COVID-19 research.

Who can contribute samples and information to the Biobank Network?

The Biobank Network includes samples and information from people who meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Had COVID-19 and *were not* hospitalized.

2. Had COVID-19 and *were* hospitalized.

3. Still have symptoms at least 3 months after getting COVID-19 (long haulers).

4. Want to volunteer to take part in COVID-19 research.

Including samples and information from people with different experiences of COVID-19 is important. It will help us support a variety of research studies to really understand COVID-19.

BIOBANKING AND RESEARCH

Why is the Biobank Network useful?

The Biobank Network can help researchers do many different research studies. The Biobank Network is also a way for patients and others to contribute to research.

The **goal** of the Biobank Network is **to help answer research questions** so that we have a better understanding of COVID-19. This will lead to:

- Better treatments

- Improved understanding of why COVID-19 makes some people sicker than others

- Help us prevent the rapid spread of COVID-19.

Researchers can request samples and information from the Biobank Network that will be useful for their study.

GOVERNANCE

Who oversees the Biobank Network?

The Biobank Network has a governing group that is made up of four committees. Each committee includes doctors, researchers, patient partners, and experts in privacy and ethics.
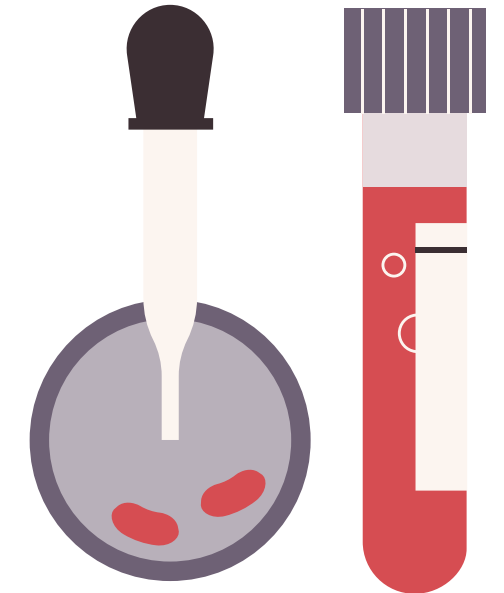
Executive Steering Committee: oversees the functioning of the biobank

Governance Committee: oversees daily operations

Scientific Review Committee: reviews research requests for samples

Patient Advisory Committee: provides input about how they think the biobank should be run

If you are interested, you can become a patient partner on any one of these committttees. Please email bc.biobanknetwork@ubc.ca to learn more.

How can I participate?

If you want to contribute to the Biobank Network:

1. Read and sign the consent form. The Biobank Network consent form can be filled out electronically. Go to https://bit.ly/3sZLTj7.

2. Complete a very short questionnaire online about your ethnicity and COVID-19 status. It will take about 2 minutes to complete.

3. Visit a lab of your choice to donate a blood sample (3-4 tubes of blood, or about 3-4 teaspoons in total).

Your samples will be divided into small tubes and then frozen in a secure biobank freezer. Nobody needs to know you have given to the Biobank Network unless you tell them. Both your samples and your answers to the questionnaire will be given a code number so researchers will not know that the samples or information came from you.

Being in the Biobank Network doesn't cost you anything and there are no financial incentives for your participation.

You should know that researchers pay a small fee when they get samples from the Biobank Network. This fee is to cover some of the costs involved in collecting and freezing the samples.

How do researchers access the samples?

The samples and information that you give to the Biobank Network will be used for COVID-19 research.

Researchers who want COVID-19 samples apply to the Biobank Network. The Scientific Review Committee reads their application and decides which samples in the Biobank Network will be useful for the study. The researchers must show that their study has approval from a research ethics board before they can receive samples.

How is my privacy protected?

All samples are stored in secure freezers in several places in the province such as Vancouver General Hospital, BC Children's Hospital, St Paul's Hospital, and Victoria General Hospital. Only trained Biobank Network staff can get samples from the freezers.

Your information is stored in a secure Biobank Network computer database on the University of British Columbia server. It is protected by firewalls and strict security measures. We work with biobanking and information technology experts who help look after your samples and information.

What if I no longer want my samples in the Biobank Network?

You can withdraw your sample and information at any time. Simply let us know by email (bc.biobanknetwork@ubc.ca) that you do not want your sample in the Biobank Network anymore.
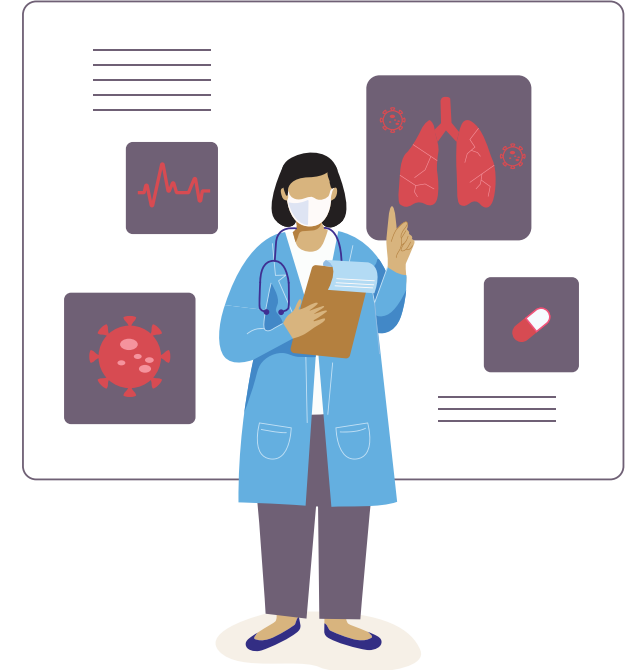
What are the risks?

There is a small risk of a little bruising or becoming lightheaded when your blood sample is collected. It is a very small amount of blood that is collected so these risks are unlikely.

There is a potential that the researchers may find out something about your health that you didn't already know. When you complete your consent form to participate in the Biobank Network, you will be asked if you wish to be contacted if any potential medical problems are detected when the researchers analyze your blood sample. If you wish to be contacted, you will be asked to give the name of a health-care professional (e.g., your family doctor) whom you would like to call you to discuss these findings.

We will always do our best to protect your privacy and confidentiality, however there is a very small chance that you could be identified as being a Biobank participant. If this happens, we will inform you.

Learn more

If you have more questions, please email us at bc.biobanknetwork@ubc.ca

If you would like to take part in the Biobank Network, please review and sign the biobank consent form:

https://bit.ly/3sZLTj7

Post COVID-19
Interdisciplinary Clinical Care Network
Recovery | Care | Research | Education

In partnership with the BC Biobank Network

Provincial Health Services Authority

First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

fraserhealth

island health

Michael Smith Health Research BC

Interior Health

northern health
the northern way of caring

Providence
HEALTH CARE

Vancouver CoastalHealth

SFU

UBC