

Tissue Procurement General Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Tissue Procurement Core?

The Tissue Procurement Core (TPC) is a service based within the Frozen Section Room of the University of Michigan Hospital, with the function of prospectively obtaining surgically resected tissue for research while safeguarding all aspects of patient care. The TPC is authorized by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to obtain excess tissue from surgically resected specimens that are not needed for morphologic evaluation. A skilled technologist works with surgeons, investigators and pathologists to process acquired tissue to maximize its scientific value without compromising diagnostic processing. In addition, the TPC provides investigators access to histopathologic parameters available from the final diagnostic report while preserving patient confidentiality.

2. Who can use the Tissue Procurement Service?

Any member of the University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center is eligible. Applications can be found at [New TPC Enrollment](#).

3. What if I need to change my request with the Tissue Procurement Service?

If you need to make any changes to your request, please use this form: [Tissue Procurement Update Form](#)

4. What types of processing are available for procured tissues?

Tissue may be collected:

- 1) fresh (without media)
- 2) fresh in media – for cell culture (including sterile procedures for establishment of cell culture)
- 3) snap frozen in liquid nitrogen
- 4) frozen in OCT
- 5) in formalin to be embedded into paraffin

5. How is sterile tissue procured?

Sterile instruments are maintained in the Tissue Procurement area of the Frozen Section Room. Surgeons must be asked to send specimens designated for sterile procurement in a sterile basin covered with sterile towels (or in any other sterile container). Sterile tissue has successfully been obtained from numerous specimens using this protocol. Tissues may be procured without microbial contamination even when (non-sterile) ink is applied to the outside of the specimens for diagnostic purposes (i.e., designation of margins)

6. Does the Tissue Procurement Service supply tissue culture media?

Tissue Procurement provides RPMI w/L-glutamine. Investigators who would like for specimens to be placed in any other media must provide the media. Media can be stored at 4 degrees C in the Frozen Section room as long as there is proper documentation (MSDS) on file with the TPC.

7. If the surgeon performing the operation agrees (or I am the surgeon acquiring tissue for my own research), can tissue be acquired in the operating room without being sent to Pathology first?

Input from a pathologist or pathologist assistant can be critical in ensuring that tissue sampling does not compromise diagnostic features of the specimen. Hence, the TPC does NOT provide support for

the acquisition of tissue for research in the absence of a pathologist (or pathologist assistant). The TPC will not take responsibility for providing supplies (such as liquid nitrogen), documentation, or storage of tissues procured in the absence of a pathologist and our Tissue Procurement Technologist.

8. When is Tissue Procurement available?

Hours may vary depending on staffing levels. Please inquire when enrolling with the Tissue Procurement Core (dpostiff@med.umich.edu). Procurement is not available for evening, overnight or weekend procurements.

9. Do I have to know when a surgical procedure is going to be performed in order to have tissue procured from it?

The TPC usually obtains information regarding specimens by reviewing each day's operative schedule in advance. Thus, placement by the investigator of a "standing order" for tissue of a given type is generally the easiest and most successful means for tissue procurement. In addition, if an investigator has advance knowledge of a specific case of interest, especially those involving unusual diagnoses or patients with particular clinical characteristics, we ask that he or she notifies the Tissue Procurement technologist in ADVANCE. **We will process all requests for tissue from specific cases that are received by 3:00pm on the previous (working) day before surgery.** The Tissue Procurement technologist will post a list of tissues that they would like to obtain tissue from each day.

10. How is the procured tissue transferred to the investigator?

This depends on how the Investigator has requested that we obtain tissue for them.

**** FRESH** tissue that we procure on will be placed in media and the investigator (or their contact person) will be notified that tissue is ready to be picked up. For daytime pick up please come to UH1D354 and let them know what lab you are picking tissue up for. Tissue Procurement will provide it to you. Late afternoon/evening pickups can be made from the small refrigerator in UH1D354. Please double check that you are taking the correct specimens (labeled for your lab).

**** SNAP FROZEN, OCT, Formalin** tissues will be picked up by the investigator when the Tissue Procurement technician notifies the investigator that they have tissue ready to be picked up. Tissue not picked up after 1 year will be re-assigned to the Core's Frozen Tumor Bank.

11. Can I get a histologic frozen section prepared?

Currently, no. Although that may change in the future. Please email dpostiff@med.umich.edu with inquiries.

12. Can the Tissue Procurement Core store tissues for an investigator?

The resources of the Tissue Procurement Core are primarily designed to prospectively procure tissue for investigators. A -80-degree C freezer is available for **limited** storage, but limited freezer space makes it unsuitable for long term storage. Specimens that have not been picked up after 1 year will be re-assigned to another investigator, after the responsible investigator has had the opportunity to take possession of them.

13. Does the Tissue Procurement Core manage a "Tissue Bank"

Currently the TPC manages the FTB (Frozen Tumor Bank). The Tissues procured for the FTB are excess and thus are not part of the medical record. A separate approval letter can be obtained from Dr. Giordano for use of these tissues. As of late 2020 the FTB contains 23,000 tissue blocks.

14. When is Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval required for procurement of tissue for research?

Acquisition of any tissue that is to be the subject of research or development requires IRB approval. For procurement of limited numbers of normal tissue specimens that will be used only as controls rather than as the subject of any analysis themselves an IRB is not needed. More info can be found at <https://research.medicine.umich.edu/our-units/institutional-review-boards-irbmed>

15. How do I initiate procurement of tissue?

An application for enrollment in the Tissue Procurement Core can be found at [New TPC Enrollment](#)

Please fill out the application and return to Deborah Postiff, by email or campus mail.

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In addition, documentation of IRB approval must be obtained prior to commencement of tissue procurement, except for special situations as described above. Application for IRB approval should be submitted to the IRB office. A copy of IRB approval must be received by the TPC before the acquisition of tissue can commence. Notification of approval of Services of Tissue Procurement, will in most cases take less than two weeks.

16. Who do I contact for an application or for further questions?

Questions regarding tissue procurement should be directed to the Tissue Procurement Core technicians – Deborah Postiff dpostiff@med.umich.edu Pager: 8952.