



# NEWSLETTER

**December 2015**



**HAPPY CHRISTMAS** and Welcome to the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the INTERVAL Participant Newsletter and thank you for your valuable contributions to our research. The main results of the study are expected to be available in early 2017. As this is some time away we would like to provide you with a study update so you know what progress has been made and what's happening next.

## What has been happening?

In June 2014, we reached our target to recruit approximately 50,000 donors to INTERVAL. Nearly **40,000** donors have now completed 2 years in the study and of these over half have agreed to stay on the study a bit longer by joining INTERVAL Phase II (recruitment to Phase II has now ended).

## When is the study due to end?

All INTERVAL donors will complete their involvement in the study in mid-2016. At this time the INTERVAL researchers will start to analyse the results – this will take some time given the large amount of data that has been collected. It is expected that the overall findings of the study will be available in early 2017.

## Thank you for your contributions....

The samples and data we are collecting from you during the study are very important in finding out the optimum donation intervals to maintain future blood supplies and donor health. We are very grateful for the research samples you've provided and your responses to our questionnaires.

As a mark of your valued contribution to the INTERVAL study, a certificate of your involvement will be available to collect from your Donor Centre from 18<sup>th</sup> January. Please ask for one when you next visit after this date.

## What more can you do to help?

If you are still participating in the INTERVAL study we would be very grateful if you can continue to complete the questionnaires we send you every 6 months. Your responses are very important in understanding the impact of donating more frequently on your health and well-being. **We need your responses even if you are not able to donate** (e.g. due to low hemoglobin, a recent tattoo etc.).

**New contact details?**  
If you change your email or phone number, call:  
**0800 064 0089**  
**Mon to Fri: 09.00–17.00**  
Or, email us at:  
**[helpdesk@intervalstudy.org.uk](mailto:helpdesk@intervalstudy.org.uk)**

Your questionnaire responses and research blood sample collected after 2 years on the study are especially important. For this reason you may receive more reminders from us about these. Current response rates are shown in the box below. These are good but ***you can help improve these by providing your questionnaire responses and 2-year samples when they are due.*** For those who have already provided these – ***Thank you!***

### Response rates to.....

2-year questionnaire: 71%  
2-year research samples: 76%



### How have my samples been used?

We've asked you to give a research blood sample when you joined INTERVAL (your 'baseline' sample) and, again after 2 years. Measurements have been made in some of your baseline sample to characterise groups of blood donors who, for example, may be more or less susceptible to iron deficiency. These measurements include your:

- full blood count, including haemoglobin levels
- DNA variation for many genes e.g. those involved in making blood cells
- Other blood markers giving clues about health

Measurements will later be made in your 2-year research sample to look at differences in iron-related blood markers (e.g. haemoglobin and ferritin) between donors allocated to more or less frequent study donation intervals during the study. The results will provide information on the impact of donation frequency on the body's iron levels.

### What else is being measured?

Limited research suggests that the body's iron levels affect individuals' ability to perform ***physical***

***and cognitive (or thinking) activities***; however large studies, like INTERVAL, will provide more reliable evidence. So, we're asking all participants to answer questions on their physical activity and thinking processes in the 2-year questionnaire. We're also asking some participants to wear an activity monitor for 7 days. These monitors (or accelerometers) provide a more objective way to assess physical activity compared to questionnaires. Accelerometers contain a tiny mechanism that measures accelerations in 3 directions (up/down; forward/backward; and left/right) and in this way are able to detect how active a person has been. Data from the monitors will be analysed by researchers to estimate, for example, the amount of time spent in activities of lower or higher intensity.

### What else is happening?

INTERVAL donors are being invited to join the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) BioResource – a research organisation funded by the Department of Health to advance understanding of diseases such as cancer and diabetes <https://bioresource.nihr.ac.uk/>. If you're interested and haven't received an email invite yet, you'll receive one in the next few months.

### How do I find out about study results?

The main results will not be available for a while, but study papers have been (or are being) written. These will be added to the website <http://www.intervalstudy.org.uk/publications/> where you will find the study's protocol paper.

**Need to make your next donation  
appointment?**

**Call 0300 0200 333**

**Thank you!!**