



## ***Introduction of Blood Testing in Gaelic Games*** **Information for Players**

As part of the GAA's commitment to the maintenance of Hurling and Football as drug free sports, and having signed up to the provisions of the World Anti-Doping Agency in this regard, Blood Testing on a limited basis will be introduced in Gaelic Games from January 1st 2016.

Blood Testing has been a fact of life for many athletes in Ireland's largest sports for a number of years, having been introduced to the likes of Rugby, Cycling, Boxing, Athletics and Swimming in recent years. The GAA have worked closely with the Irish Sports Council in terms of its introduction and the programme that will be rolled out – while meeting with the ISC's requirements in this regard - has been designed taking careful consideration of the unique circumstances of our amateur players, their support personnel and our team and training structures.

Compliance with the Irish Sports Council's Anti-Doping Programme is a condition of the Government Eligible Expenses Scheme for Inter-County players, which is administered by the GPA.

### **Why is blood testing being introduced?**

As has been proven with other sports, blood testing will further assist in providing a level playing field for all players and provide an additional means for them to continue to demonstrate they are competing cleanly. Some prohibited substances (such as human growth hormones) and methods are more easily detected in a blood test, than in a urine test.

However, blood testing is not a replacement for urine testing and both blood and urine can be tested on certain occasions.

**As with urine testing the sanction for refusal is a period of ineligibility of up to four years from sport.**

## **What happens during a blood test?**

The steps in the collection of blood are similar to the collection of urine samples. If you have been asked to provide both a blood and a urine sample, then your blood sample can be taken either before or after you have provided a urine sample.

All blood samples are taken by qualified professionals who are trained phlebotomists.

If you are afraid of needles, let the blood collection officer know so that they can help you through the process.

***Please note:*** If you have a phobia of needles you should inform the team doctor at the start of the season so as the Doping Control Officer and Blood Collection Officer can be informed if you are selected for a test.

## **Here is what happens in a blood collection process:**

### **1. Notification**

A doping control officer will let you know that you have been selected for testing. The officer will be wearing identification and will explain your rights and responsibilities. You will then be asked to show some official photo ID and to sign a notification form. You can ask for a representative of your choice (team official) to accompany you.

### **2. Choose a collection vessel**

When you are ready to provide a sample, the doping control officer will ask you to select a sealed venipuncture kit and sample security kit (blood collection kit). This contains all the equipment necessary to take blood and seal your sample.



**Butterfly Needles & Vacutainers**



### **Blood Sample Collection Kit**

#### **3. Rest**

You will be required to rest for a minimum of ten minutes. This means you must remain in a seated position with two feet on the floor. If you are tested in-competition, after you've completed training or have just completed strenuous exercise you are required to rest for up to two hours in advance of the sample being collected. The main focus of the blood testing will be out of competition (at training sessions), however the Irish Sports Council cannot rule out that blood testing will take place after a match.

#### **4. Blood collection**

The blood collection officer will apply a tourniquet around your upper arm (if necessary) and clean the skin. The officer will insert the needle into your vein and draw enough blood to fill either two to four tubes. The maximum that is taken is 3-5mls. The volume of blood collected for the purposes of doping control will not have an impact on your performance. You will be advised not to undertake any strenuous exercise for 30 mins to minimise the bruising. The blood collection officer will be available for First Aid if required.

#### **5. Sealing the kits**

The blood collection officer will place the tubes in a special tamper evident bottle, known as a Bereg bottle. You will be asked to seal the bottles containing the tubes of blood.

#### **6. Complete the paperwork**

You will be asked to check the numbers on the Bereg bottle(s) are recorded correctly on the doping control form. You will be asked to fill in details on the doping control form, including information about any medications, supplements or substances you have recently taken.

You can also note any comments or concerns you have about the doping control process on the form. You then sign the form and the sample collection procedure is finished.

#### **7. Transfer samples to the lab**

The sealed samples will be transported to a WADA accredited laboratory for analysis. Samples are always transported in securely and every step of the process is fully documented.

## Further Information

If you have any queries please consult with your team doctor. Information is also available from:

**For any queries regarding Blood Testing or anti-doping in the GAA please contact:**

Games Administration and Player Welfare Department,  
Croke Park,  
Dublin 3.  
Tel: (0) 1 865 8610  
E-mail: [playerwelfare@gaa.ie](mailto:playerwelfare@gaa.ie)  
Website: <http://www.gaa.ie/medical-and-player-welfare/anti-doping/>

**The Irish Sports Council Anti-Doping Unit can also be contacted directly at:**

Anti-Doping Unit  
Irish Sports Council  
Top Floor, Block A  
Westend Office Park,  
Blanchardstown,  
Dublin 15.  
Tel: 00353 1 8608800  
E-mail: [antidoping@irishsportsCouncil.ie](mailto:antidoping@irishsportsCouncil.ie)  
Website: <http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/antidoping>