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The Human Nutrition Unit

A source of expertise and facilities for undertaking human nutritional studies

IFR's Human Nutrition Unit (HNU) is one of very few purpose-built centres in the UK dedicated to undertaking nutritional studies in human volunteers, and is complemented by the extensive relevant scientific expertise available within IFR.

The Unit is staffed by two research nurses, fully qualified and experienced to undertake the procedures required for our studies. Our two diet cooks ensure the quality and composition of the food provided to volunteers. The Unit also has a scientist-in-charge and a medical advisor.

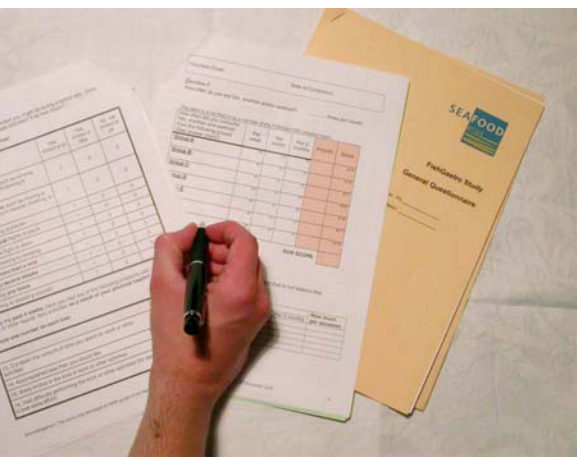
We are also indebted to the 1000+ local residents who have registered an interest in taking part in our studies.

Facilities include a clinical room, a diet kitchen, a living room with dining area, interview rooms and temperature-controlled food storage areas.

Work is undertaken according to the standard of Good Clinical Practice and all studies are reviewed and approved by IFR's Human Research Governance Committee and the Norfolk Research Ethics Committee. We also work to IFR's quality assurance standard of ISO 9001.

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Life as a Volunteer

The HNU provides a relaxed volunteer and research friendly atmosphere where volunteers are cared for by the two research nurses and two diet cooks. Your well-being is our prime concern and you will be under constant supervision whilst you are in the Unit. The research staff are here to support you whilst you participate in the studies and will help with any questions you may have.

Study requirements vary from short visits to the HNU for meals or single blood samples to all day visits. You will have access to television, videos and music whilst you are here and are very welcome to bring your own selection. We are flexible and try to cater for personal requirements as far as the study allows.

Most of our volunteers have participated in many studies over the years and keep coming back for more! We are extremely grateful to all our volunteers as you play an important part in our research.

If you are interested in our research studies and in becoming a volunteer please speak to one of the staff available in HNU today and feel free to take a database information pack away with you.

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Human Nutrition Unit Diet Kitchen

Each day is different in the kitchen as all studies have special requirements and the two diet cooks are kept busy.

The daily preparation for a volunteer can vary from just a milky drink through to a full day's food consumption including breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and drinks.

Most of the food prepared is consumed in the HNU but some studies are quite involved and require batch cooking of specific meals. Volunteers then incorporate these into their daily routine. Meals are weighed and prepared in the Unit kitchen but then delivered to the volunteer's home in cool boxes.

Studies may not always require the volunteer to eat food supplied by the Unit but only to avoid certain types e.g. those high in folate (such as granary bread, spinach, broccoli).

Diet preparation is a very important part of the research study as consistency and accuracy are paramount. Many food samples are taken for analysis before, during and on completion of each study. This is for the use of the scientist and also ensuring that food hygiene legislation is followed as set by the Environmental Health Office.