



Australian Health Survey



Ph: 1800 904 314

www.abs.gov.au/australianhealthsurvey

Biomedical information sheet

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is asking if you would provide a small sample of blood and urine to help us better understand the health of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This part of the Australian Health Survey (AHS) **is voluntary**.

This information sheet will provide important information to help you decide if you would like to take part.

If, after reading all this information you would like to take part, please tell the ABS interviewer and then sign a consent form. You can give the signed form to the ABS interviewer or mail it back to the ABS using the reply-paid envelope provided.

Biomedical sample collection

The AHS will collect information from pathology tests on blood and urine samples from selected adults aged 18 years and over.

Information from the pathology tests on your blood and urine samples will help governments, health researchers and the community to better understand health problems of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

If you decide to take part you will be given a referral form to take to a local pathology collection centre. The form will have a few questions for you to complete, and a few for the collector to fill in. These questions ask about medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins) you might take and whether you ate or drank anything before giving your blood sample. You will also need to put on the form whether you would like to give a blood sample, a urine sample or both.

Confidentiality

The company conducting the pathology tests will hold all results **in confidence** under the *Privacy Act 1988*. In the rare case that a **significant risk** to your health is found, you or your nominated doctor will be contacted by a senior clinician from the pathology company.

When the test results are provided to the ABS they **remain confidential under the Census and Statistics Act 1905**, and your name, address and date of birth will be removed once the survey is complete.



good health, our future

get
involved



Where do I go for the test?

Sonic Healthcare has been selected as the company who will do the pathology collecting and testing for the Australian Health Survey. **Sonic Healthcare** has over 900 pathology collection centres around Australia. Your ABS interviewer will help you to find a pathology collection centre that is easy for you to get to. Remember to take your AHS referral form with you, or else the tests can't be done. If you can't leave your home because you are disabled or very sick we might be able to send a nurse to collect your samples. If you live out of town and the nearest collection centre is over 50 km away, other arrangements may be able to be made for you to provide samples. For example, in some areas the ABS has organised a particular time and place where a qualified health professional will be available to collect your samples. Either way, please let your interviewer know that you would like to take part, sign your consent form, and then the ABS will contact you if other arrangements can be made.

Providing samples – how is it done?

The tests for the AHS will be very similar to other blood or urine tests you might have had before. If you decide to give a blood sample you will be asked to fast (not to eat) for about 8-12 hours or overnight (if possible) before your blood test. To 'fast' means not eating or drinking anything other than water – no food, tea, coffee, fruit juices, etc. When you arrive at the collection centre a trained collector will:

- **check the details on the referral form,**
- **verify your identity – they may ask for identification (ID) to check who you are, then**
- **take a small blood sample (less than 30 ml / 1-2 tablespoons) from the arm near the elbow and will ask for a urine sample.**

These tests should take about 10 to 20 minutes to complete. You will **not** be charged for the tests, they are **free**.

You can claim a reimbursement of \$50 after providing your samples to cover any costs you might have had, such as childcare or travel expenses (no receipts are needed to claim the reimbursement). Details of how to claim your reimbursement are included on the pathology referral form. Reimbursements are not available if you have a home visit from a nurse.

Possible risks and discomforts

There is very little medical risk when giving a blood or urine specimen. While giving your blood sample you may feel some discomfort, bruise a little, or occasionally people get dizzy or feel faint. In very rare cases, some people may develop an infection where the needle goes into their arm. However, your pathology collector is professionally trained to manage these risks.

If you have any health conditions or special issues which may increase the possibility of the above risks (e.g. anaemia or low immune function) please tell the pathology collector **before** giving your sample.

What is being tested?

Your blood sample will be tested for cholesterol and other lipids (fats) associated with heart disease, and glucose (sugar) levels associated with diabetes. Blood and urine samples will also be tested for kidney function and levels of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients including folate, vitamin B12, iodine, sodium (salt) and iron levels. Samples will not be used for genetic or identity testing and will not be tested for drugs, pregnancy, or sexually transmitted infections.

Your results

You will receive your results from the pathology tests within three weeks. In the very rare case that a significant risk to your health is found during testing of your samples, you or your nominated health care provider will be contacted by a pathologist from **Sonic Healthcare** and told about what to do next. When filling in your referral form you are also encouraged to nominate a doctor or local medical service so that a copy of your test results can be sent to them too. Your doctor or local medical service can best explain what your test results mean.

As allowed under the *Privacy Act 1988*, in the event of a health emergency arising from your pathology test results your personal details may be passed onto a local doctor or hospital to assist in providing you with the necessary medical attention.

Do you have to provide samples?

Providing samples of blood and/or urine is **voluntary**.

You can choose whether or not you would like to be in this part of the survey. Because this part of the AHS is voluntary, you can change your mind at any time.

If you want to take part but can't get to a collection centre, please contact the ABS on **ph: 1800 904 314** to talk about other options.

What are the benefits of participation?

Your results might give you new information about your health, or they may be something you would like to talk about with your doctor.

Your information will also help develop future health policies, guidelines and public health programs that will be important for you, your family, your community and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for years to come.

Information from your samples will be combined with other people's information to give a picture of the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in general – the more people who take part in the survey, the more accurate this picture will be. **Because everyone's information is combined and made completely confidential – no individuals will be able to be identified from these results.** This data will enable a wide range of research into the relationship between nutrition, physical activity and how these affect health for everyone. A summary of the combined survey results will be published on the ABS website from mid-2014.

What will happen to your samples?

Your samples will only be used for the Australian Health Survey. After the survey is completed, all samples will be destroyed. **You can decide not to take part at any time.**

This survey is not designed to diagnose or treat any health problems you may have. If you are worried about your health, please talk to your doctor.

If you have any questions about taking part in this survey please contact the ABS on **ph: 1800 904 314**.

For any concerns about ethical issues relating to the biomedical part of the survey, contact details of the Department of Health and Ageing Ethics Committee, and/or relevant local/regional Ethics Committee (over leaf).

Thank you

Executive Officer
Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing Ethics Committee
GPO Box 9848
CANBERRA ACT 2601
MDP 132
Phone: (02) 62893396
Email: ethics@health.gov.au

Local/Regional Ethics Committee Details