



Australian Health Survey



Ph: 1800 904 314

www.abs.gov.au/australianhealthsurvey

Biomedical information sheet - Community

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is asking you to 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**. So you don't have to provide samples.

This information sheet will provide important information to help you decide if you would like to provide these samples.

If, after reading this information you would like to take part, please tell the ABS interviewer and give your permission.

Biomedical sample collection

The AHS will collect information from the tests on blood and urine samples given by selected adults aged 18 years or older.

Information from the 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 people.

Confidentiality

The company conducting the pathology tests will hold all results **in confidence** under the *Privacy Act 1988*. Your test results will also be sent to the local health service where you gave your blood and urine samples so a doctor can assess whether you require medical care. If you have consented to sharing your health records these test results will be made available to all health professionals accessing your Shared electronic Health Record (SeHR).

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.



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Information for Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Peoples



Where and when do I go for the test?

If you decide to take part, you will be given a referral to have your sample(s) - that's your urine and/or blood – collected by a qualified health worker at your health service. The ABS will need your samples soon after your interview, so please check with your ABS interviewer and/or health service as to when that time is.

If you can't leave your home because you are very sick or looking after someone who is sick, the ABS may get a health worker to come to your home to collect your samples.

Providing samples – how is it done?

The tests for the AHS will be very similar to other blood or urine tests you may have had before. If you decide to give a blood sample you will be asked not to eat for about 8-12 hours or overnight (if possible) before your blood test. This means not eating or drinking anything other than water - no food, tea, coffee, fruit juices, etc. When you arrive at the health service, a health worker will check the details on the referral form, then take a small blood sample (less than 30 ml / 1-2 tablespoons) from your 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** have to pay for the tests, they are **free**.

You can claim a reimbursement of \$50 from your ABS interviewer 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). Reimbursements are not available if you have a home visit.

Possible risks and discomforts

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

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

What is being tested?

Your blood sample will be tested for cholesterol and other lipids (blood 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 testing and **will not** be tested for drugs, pregnancy, or sexually transmitted infections.

Your results

The local health service (where you provide your blood and/or urine samples) or doctor will get a copy of your pathology test results. A doctor will look at these results to assess whether you need any medical care. You will hear from the health service if follow-up is required. You can also get a copy of your results in the mail (within three weeks) if you ask for it.

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.

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 or health worker.

Your information will 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 kept secret – no individuals will be able to be identified from these results.** This information 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

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Local/Regional Ethics Committee Details