



# Australian Health Survey



Ph: 1800 904 314

[www.abs.gov.au/australianhealthsurvey](http://www.abs.gov.au/australianhealthsurvey)



## Biomedical Information Sheet

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is asking if you would provide a small blood and urine sample, to help us better understand the health of Australians. This is a voluntary part of the Australian Health Survey.

This Information Sheet will provide you with important information to assist you with your choice.

If after reading this information sheet you are willing to participate, please indicate this by signing the attached consent form. You can give the signed form to your ABS Interviewer or mail it back to the ABS using the Reply Paid envelope.

### Biomedical sample collection

The Australian Health Survey aims to collect information from pathology tests on blood samples from selected adults and children aged 12 years and over, and urine samples from selected adults and children aged 5 years and over.

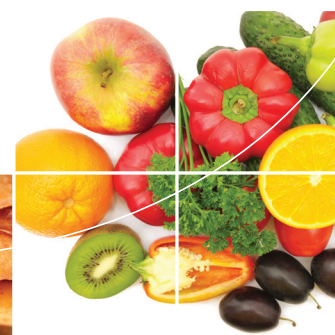
The information obtained from tests on your samples will help fill knowledge gaps about the health of Australians. With your assistance we will be able to provide governments, health researchers and the community with important clues about health problems in Australia.

If you decide to participate, you will be provided with a referral form. The form will have some questions for you to complete, and a few for the pathology collector. These questions are about medications taken for specific conditions, nutritional supplements and whether, and for how long, you fasted prior to providing a blood sample. You will also need to indicate on the form which samples you are providing – blood and/or urine.

### 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 was found, you or your nominated doctor will be contacted by a senior clinician from the pathology company.

Once your 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.





## Where do I go for the tests?

Sonic Healthcare has been selected as the national pathology service provider for the Australian Health Survey. Sonic Healthcare operates over 900 pathology collection centres nationwide. Your ABS Interviewer will assist you to identify the most convenient collection centre for you to attend. If you are unable to leave your home due to a disability or medical condition you may be entitled to a home visit. If you are in a rural area and the nearest collection centre is over 50km away, other arrangements may be able to be made for you to provide your samples. Please let your interviewer know that you are interested in participating, provide your signed consent, and then an ABS officer will contact you if other arrangements can be made.

## The tests

Undertaking the tests for the AHS will be much the same as other blood and urine tests you might have had. On the day of your tests we would ask that you fast for approximately 8-12 hours (if possible) usually overnight, for blood tests only. This means *nil by mouth* other than water, i.e. no food, tea, coffee, juice, etc. When you arrive at the collection centre a trained collector will:

- check the details on your referral form
- verify your identity, then
- take a small sample of blood (less than 40ml/2 tablespoons) from your arm near your elbow and ask you for a urine sample.

These tests should take about ten to twenty minutes to complete. **You will not be charged for the tests.**

You can claim a reimbursement of \$50 to offset any costs you may incur in providing your samples, for example; childcare or travel expenses (no receipts are needed), unless you have received a home visit. Details of how to claim your reimbursement are included on the pathology referral form.

## Possible risks and discomforts

The medical risk of providing blood and urine specimens is minimal. While giving your blood sample, you may experience some discomfort, slight bruising, and in very rare cases some individuals may develop an infection at the site of needle insertion. Occasionally some people experience dizziness or feel faint. 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 compromised immune function) please advise the pathology collector immediately.

## What is being tested?

Your blood sample will be tested for cholesterol and other lipids (fats) associated with heart disease, and for glucose levels associated with diabetes. The samples (blood and urine) will also be tested for kidney function and for nutritional status including folate, vitamin B12, iodine, sodium and iron levels. Samples will not be used for genetic testing and will not be tested for illicit drugs, pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections or diseases.



### Will you be provided with results?

You will receive a copy of your pathology test results within three weeks, unless you choose otherwise. In the rare event that a significant risk to your health is found during testing of your samples, you will be contacted and advised on the best course of action. You are also encouraged to nominate a doctor when you arrive at the collection centre; as your doctor is best placed to advise you what the discovery of any adverse results might mean for you. If you nominate a doctor on your referral form he or she will also be sent a copy of the results.

### Providing samples of blood and/or urine is voluntary

You may choose whether or not to volunteer in this part of the survey. If you choose to participate you may withdraw at any time if you feel unable to continue.

If you would like to participate, but you are unable to visit a local collection centre, please contact the ABS on ph: **1800 904 314** to discuss other options.

### What are the benefits of participating?

Your test results may give you new insights into your health, or may be something you might like to discuss with your doctor.

You will also be contributing information that will guide future healthcare policies, guidelines and public health programs that will be relevant to you and your family for years to come.

De-identified information from your samples will be combined with other people's information to assess the health of Australians in general – the more people participating, the more accurate this picture will be. This data will enable a wide range of research into the relationship between nutrition, physical activity and health outcomes for everyone in our community. A summary of everyone's combined survey results will be published on the ABS website from mid 2013. No individuals will be able to be identified from these results.

### What will happen to my samples?

Your samples will only be used for the purpose of testing for the Australian Health Survey. After the Australian Health Survey is completed, your samples will be destroyed.

**You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time prior to providing samples.**

**This survey is not intended for the purpose of diagnosing or treating any health problems you may have. Participation in this survey does not take the place of visits to a doctor or other health professionals.**

**If you have any questions or concerns regarding this survey or if any problems arise please contact the ABS on ph: 1800 904 314.**

*Thank you*