



Australian Government
Department of Health

VOLUNTARY BLOOD TESTING PROGRAM FOR PFAS

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Background

What are Per- and Poly-fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)?

- Man made chemicals widely used since the 1950s in household and industrial products.
- Most people living in Australia will have measurable levels of PFAS in their blood.



Human Health Effects

The current health advice for PFAS exposure is:

- *There is currently **no consistent evidence** that exposure to PFOS and PFOA causes adverse human health effects.*
- *Because these chemicals persist in humans and the environment, enHealth recommends that human exposure to these chemicals **is minimised as a precaution.***



Exposure

Exposure pathways

- Primarily ingestion of contaminated groundwater or food.
- Low level exposure sources include:
 - Inhalation of dust contaminated with PFAS; and
 - Transdermal absorption

Minimising exposure

- For advice on minimising exposure in the Williamtown area see:
 - Department of Defence's Human Health Risk Assessment :
http://www.defence.gov.au/id/_Master/docs/Williamtown/DefenceWilliamtownHHRAFactsheetAug16.pdf
 - NSW EPA: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/protectingyourenvironment.htm>
- For advice on minimising exposure in the Oakey area see:
 - Department of Defence's Human Health Risk Assessment:
http://www.defence.gov.au/id/_Master/docs/Oakey/Defence%20Oakey%20HHRA%20fact%20sheet_Sept16_WEB.pdf
 - QLD Government: <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/pollution/management/investigation-pfas/oakey/index.html>



Voluntary Blood Testing Program for PFAS

- The Program commenced on 30 November 2016 and offers a free single voluntary blood test to eligible people.
- Free blood testing available until 31 March 2018.
- Program will run concurrently with the Epidemiological Study, whereby, where consent is given, PFAS Blood Test results can be included in Study.
- Patients must be referred to a Sonic Healthcare Collection Centre for this PFAS blood test.
- This Program replaces the Department of Defence interim blood testing arrangements.



The Role of the GP

- General Practitioners will play a key role in the Voluntary Blood Testing Program.
- Patients are required to go through their local GP in order to request the PFAS blood test under this program.
- The Australian Government is funding Pre and post-test counselling by the GP.
- The Department of Health has released a number of factsheets to assist GPs in understanding their responsibilities under this program. These are available at www.health.gov.au/PFAS.



Patient Eligibility

- People eligible for a blood test include:
 - Those who currently live or work in the Williamtown, NSW and Oakey, QLD, Investigation Areas; OR
 - Those who have previously lived or worked in the Investigation Areas of Williamtown and Oakey but now live elsewhere
 - Children who live in the Williamtown and Oakey Investigation Areas or who undertake day to day activities in the Investigation Areas are also eligible
- Statutory Declaration
- Additional considerations:
 - Eligibility if Patient has received a blood test previously received under the Department of Defense Interim arrangement
 - Eligibility for Australian Defence Force Personnel



Pre-Test Consultation

- See the *Voluntary Blood Testing Program for PFAS: Pre-test consultation advice for GPs* factsheet for detailed information on the pre-test consultation.
- Key discussion points with the patient may include:
 - Limitations of the blood test.
 - Treatment.
- Requesting a test.
 - Please call 02 9855 5437 or email commercial.path@sonichealthcare.com to request a PFAS Test Request Form from Sonic Healthcare.
- Advice on additional testing.
- The epidemiological study.



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An Epidemiological Study for Williamstown and Oakey

- The Australian Government has commissioned the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the Australian National University (ANU) to examine the potential health effects resulting from PFAS exposure through an epidemiological study.
- Participation in the study will be purely voluntary, however, it will be important for as many people as possible to participate in this study to ensure that the results are as meaningful as possible.



An Epidemiological Study for Williamstown and Oakey

- Currently in planning phase
- Systematic review PFAS & health effects
- Qualitative
 - 3-4 focus groups in community
 - Explore health & other concerns
- Capturing pathology blood test results
 - Storing specimens
- Cross sectional survey
 - Exposures & blood testing
- Discussing other possible studies



Post-test Consultation

- See the *Voluntary Blood Testing Program for PFAS: Post-test consultation advice for GPs* factsheet for detailed information on the post-test consultation.
- Key discussion points with the patient may include:
 - There are no normal reference ranges for PFAS.
 - Minimising exposure.
 - Testing frequency.
 - If required, referral to additional Mental Health and Counselling Services.



Further Information

- Further information is available from the Department of Health website at: <http://www.health.gov.au/pfas>
- Face to face consultations are scheduled to discuss the Voluntary Blood Testing Program as follows:
 - Williamtown, NSW – 13 December 2016 from 6:00-7:30 pm
 - Oakey, QLD – 15 December 2016 from 6:00-7:30pm
- Please RSVP to your local PHN if you wish to attend one of these face to face sessions.



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QUESTIONS?

Please forward any further questions to
PFAS@health.gov.au