



# Voluntary Blood Testing Program for PFAS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What do I have to do to get a blood test?

You will need to visit the Department of Health's website to download a pre-filled Statutory Declaration to confirm your eligibility. You will then need to make an appointment with your GP to receive a referral for a blood test and bring your completed Statutory Declaration with you.

After you have your referral you can have your blood collected at any Sonic Healthcare Collection Centre during their normal business hours. Please take both your request form and your Statutory Declaration to the collection centre.

To find your nearest collection centre, please refer to the Sonic Healthcare Australia website ([soniccommercialpath.com.au](http://soniccommercialpath.com.au)). Please note that Sonic Healthcare Australia trades under the name of *Douglass Hanly Moir Pathology* in NSW and *Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology* in Qld and the NT.

**For current residents of RAAF Base Tindal and Katherine community:** Please note that Sonic Healthcare do not have a permanent pathology collection centre in Katherine. However, temporary arrangements are in place for you to have your blood taken by Sonic Healthcare. Please contact your local GP or Sonic Healthcare ([commercial.path@sonichealthcare.com](mailto:commercial.path@sonichealthcare.com)) to find out how to get your blood taken.

For more information, please refer to the *How do I get my blood tested?* Factsheet.

### How long will it take to receive my results?

Blood test results will be available from your GP within 7 to 10 days after the collection date.

### How long will the Voluntary Blood Testing Program be available?

The Voluntary Blood Testing Program will be available until 30 April 2019.

### Are children eligible for the Voluntary Blood Testing Program for PFAS?

Yes. Children who live in the RAAF Base Williamtown, Army Aviation Centre Oakey, and RAAF Base Tindal (Katherine) Investigation Areas or who undertake day to day activities in the Investigation Areas, such as attending child care, preschool or school, are eligible for the Voluntary Blood Testing Program.

### I am a full-time member of the Australian Defence Force. How can I access PFAS blood testing?

If eligible, full-time Australian Defence Force personnel (including Reserves rendering continuous full-time service) should seek testing through their usual Defence garrison health service.

### I am a member of the Australian Defence Force. How can my family access PFAS blood testing?

If eligible, families of Australian Defence Force personnel can access testing through the Voluntary Blood Testing Program for PFAS by visiting their local GP.

### I am a member of the Australian Defence Force Reserves. How can I access PFAS blood testing?

If eligible, members of the Australian Defence Force Reserves rendering continuous full-time service should seek testing through their usual Defence garrison health service. If eligible, all other Reservists can access testing through the Voluntary Blood Testing Program for PFAS by visiting their local GP.

## I used to be a member of the Australian Defence Force. How do I access the Voluntary Blood Testing Program?

If you were previously a member of the Australian Defence Force and work or live, or have worked or lived, in the Williamstown, Oakey or Katherine Investigation Areas, you can access the Voluntary Blood Testing Program by making an appointment with your regular GP. Both the GP consultation and the blood test will be provided for free to all people eligible for testing under this program, including eligible former members of the Australian Defence Force. This includes former serving personnel who hold DVA Gold or White Cards – you do not need to use your card to pay for the GP consultation or the blood test.

## How many blood tests can I get under the Voluntary Blood Testing Program?

You can only receive one blood test under this program. Repeated blood testing is not recommended as it has no clinical value. Studies suggest that it takes many years to reduce PFAS levels in the blood in humans. Therefore, frequent testing is unlikely to show significant differences in PFAS levels.

## I have already had my PFAS blood levels tested through the Department of Defence's interim blood testing program. Can I have my PFAS blood levels tested again through the Department of Health's Voluntary Blood Testing Program?

Yes, as long as you meet the eligibility requirements for the Department of Health's Voluntary Blood Testing Program. However, repeated blood testing is not recommended as it has no clinical value. Studies suggest that it takes many years to reduce PFAS levels in the blood in humans. Therefore, having your PFAS blood levels tested again is unlikely show a significant difference from your previous PFAS blood test results.

However, if you wish to get your blood tested again, and you are eligible for the Voluntary Blood Testing Program, then it is recommended that you do so in conjunction with the epidemiological study being conducted by the Australian National University.

## What are the transition arrangements from the Department of Defence's interim blood testing program to the Department of Health's Voluntary Blood Testing Program?

If you visit your GP from 30 November 2016, you will be referred to a Sonic Healthcare Collection Centre as part of the Department of Health's Voluntary Blood Testing Program, and will not be required to make any upfront payments.

If you choose not to have your blood tested by Sonic Healthcare and choose an alternative provider you will be required to pay for the tests privately.

If you have already had your blood tested on or before 30 November 2016 you will need to pay any costs upfront and seek reimbursement through the Department of Defence's interim arrangements.

For more information on how to seek reimbursement from the Department of Defence, please visit the Department of Defence website ([defence.gov.au/Environment/PFAS/](http://defence.gov.au/Environment/PFAS/)).

## What if I don't want to have my blood tested through Sonic Healthcare?

The Department of Health has contracted Sonic Healthcare to provide pathology services for the Voluntary Blood Testing Program.

If you do not have your blood collected by a Sonic Healthcare centre you will be charged by that pathology provider for the blood test. The Department of Health will not reimburse you for the costs of a test conducted by a different pathology provider.

## What is the epidemiological study being conducted by the Australian National University?

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.

The ANU research team will be collecting details of PFAS exposure, health profiles and results of PFAS blood testing from community members who live or work, or who have lived or worked, in the RAAF Base Williamtown, Army Aviation Centre Oakey and RAAF Base Tindal (Katherine) Investigation Areas.

A comparison will be made to communities without a history of PFAS contamination. Combining the results of blood testing with information about the population's health issues may help to identify possible links between PFAS exposure and disease.

If you are eligible for the Voluntary Blood Testing Program, you can consent to having your PFAS blood test results included in the study.

For more information please visit the ANU's PFAS Epidemiological Study website ([nceph.anu.edu.au/pfas-health-study](http://nceph.anu.edu.au/pfas-health-study)).

## If I already had my blood tested before the commencement of the Voluntary Blood Testing Program, can I be involved in the epidemiological study?

Yes, you are still eligible for the epidemiological study even if you have already had a blood test or do not want to participate in the Voluntary Blood Testing Program.

If you wish to be part of the epidemiological study please respond to researchers when they approach community members in the future.

## Will my personal information be provided to the Australian Government?

No. The Australian Government will not receive personal information on anyone who chooses to participate in the Voluntary Blood Testing Program or the PFAS Epidemiological Study.

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### *Further information*

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#### **The Department of Health**

For further information regarding the Australian Government Department of Health's response to PFAS contamination, including health advice published by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and its subcommittee enHealth, please visit the Department of Health website ([health.gov.au/pfas](http://health.gov.au/pfas)).

Alternatively you can contact the Department of Health by phone on 1800 941 180 or by email: [health.PFAS@health.gov.au](mailto:health.PFAS@health.gov.au).

#### **The Department of Defence**

For further information regarding to the Department of Defence's response to PFAS contamination and site specific information please visit the Department of Defence website ([defence.gov.au/Environment/PFAS/](http://defence.gov.au/Environment/PFAS/)).

