

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

2020/21 SEROLOGY SURVEILLANCE

Please take time to read this information and discuss it with your health care professional. If there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information, please email us at practiceenquiries@phc.ox.ac.uk.

Overview?

We are collecting blood samples to look at the background immunity of the population to COVID-19. This would entail your health care professional taking an additional bottle of blood from patients who are coming into the practice for a prescheduled blood test.

Do I need to fill out additional paperwork?

No. As this falls under Health Protection Regulation 3 you would only need to give verbal consent.

What is the purpose of this and why is it important?

The blood samples will be used to look at the background immunity of the population to COVID-19. This is a highly infectious disease. However, as this is a new disease, we are still learning about how it spreads and its effect on humans. Analysing the blood samples will help us better understand this virus.

Why will blood results not be sent back to the practice?

Understanding of antibody response to COVID-19 is in its early stages and there is currently very little experience regarding use of antibody tests. As this virus is new, there is not enough information about what levels of antibodies would mean adequate protection. The results from the lab will not provide any information to your health care professional on whether you are protected from COVID-19 or not. Hence it is not possible to give either antibody result or interpretation of antibody result for COVID-19 to practices or patients.

What will happen if I don't want to give a blood sample?

If you choose not to give a blood sample, an additional bottle of blood will not be collected. Your health care professional will only collect bloods for your other specified blood test(s).

What will happen to me if I agree to give a blood sample?

If you agree and provide verbal consent, your health care professional will take an additional sample of blood when you present for your scheduled blood test.

Do I have to take part?

No. A decision to take part is entirely voluntary.

Are there any possible disadvantages or risks from taking part?

We consider the procedure for the blood test to be low risk. As you are already having a scheduled blood test, you will not require an additional needle to be inserted into a vein in the arm. Usually, this procedure causes some minor pain and might result in bruising.

What happens now?

The sample which you have provided will be sent to the Public Health England (PHE) laboratory at Manchester to be tested as part of population-wide sampling. Your NHS number will be assigned a unique identifier by PHE. The data from these tests will be linked confidentially to data regularly extracted from medical records, and stored at the secure servers of The Oxford Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Research and Surveillance Centre (RSC) based at the Universities of Oxford and Surrey. The results from these tests may give us an insight about the spread of COVID-19 in different regions.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Blood samples will be labelled with your details. However, to protect your privacy, the lab will not share your identity with the researchers and the sample bottle will be destroyed. Your NHS number will be converted to a unique identifier. This surveillance will extract routinely collected data held in the surgery for all patients who have consented to take part by providing a blood sample. This data will have the same unique identifier, and will be used by researchers to link your sample to data.

What will happen to my data?

Data protection regulation requires that we state the legal basis for processing information about you. In the case of research, this is 'a task in the public interest.' The University of Oxford is the data controller and is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

We will be using information from NHS Digital in order to undertake this surveillance and will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible.

Public Health England and University of Surrey will act as data processors. The University of Oxford will collect data about you for this surveillance from your GP Practice.

Data protection regulation provides you with control over your personal data and how it is used. When you agree to your information being used in research, however, some of those rights may be limited in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available at: <https://compliance.web.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights>.

Further Enquiries:

If you have any further enquiries regarding the Oxford RCGP Research and Surveillance Centre (RSC) - PHE virology surveillance scheme, please do not hesitate to contact your GP. Alternatively, if you require further details you can contact us by emailing practiceenquiries@phc.ox.ac.uk.

Thank you for reading this information.