



# The Nurse Visit: Information for Participants

# Introduction

This survey is being carried out for the Economic and Social Research Council, by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex, with the National Centre for Social Research. A few months ago you kindly took part in the interview stage of the survey which consisted of an interview and a self-completion booklet.

An important part of this survey is looking at stability and change over time. We all know how important our health is – it has an effect on many other parts of our lives, today and as we get older.

Because health is such a key part of our lives, we think it is important to get an accurate measure of your health, and the health of people like you. To enable this to be done in as safe a way as possible, we would like to arrange for a nurse to visit your household to take some measurements.

## The nurse visit

A registered nurse will ask you some further questions and will ask permission to take some measurements. The measurements are described on the opposite page. You need not have any measurements taken if you do not wish but we very much hope you will agree to them, as they are a valuable part of this survey. If the survey results are to be useful, we need information from all types of people in all states of health. As with information obtained in the first part of the survey, we take great care to protect the confidentiality of all information and test results.

## Is the survey compulsory?

No. In all our surveys we rely on voluntary participation. The success of the survey depends on the goodwill and co-operation of those asked to take part. The more people who do take part, the more useful the results will be. You are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. However, we will not be able to remove individual information after the survey results have been published.

Everything you say is confidential unless you tell us something that indicates that you or someone else is at risk of harm, or about illegal activity which could harm the public.

## Who has reviewed the study?

The survey has been looked at by an independent group of people called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your safety, rights, wellbeing and dignity. This study has been given a favourable opinion by the Oxford Research Ethics Committee.

# The measurements

## Blood pressure

Blood pressure is measured using an inflatable cuff that goes around the upper arm. High blood pressure can be a health problem. However, blood pressure is difficult to measure accurately. A person's blood pressure is influenced by age and can vary from day to day with emotion, meals, tobacco, alcohol, medication, temperature and pain. Although the nurse will tell you your blood pressure along with an indication of its meaning, a diagnosis cannot be made on measurements taken on a single occasion.

## Lung function

We would like to measure the amount of air you can breathe out of your lungs and how quickly you can get it out. This involves blowing into a tube. The amount of air you are able to breathe out depends partly on your height, your age, and how fit you are. Your result can only be interpreted in the light of these factors. This test (spirometry) tells us how well your lungs are working.

## Height, weight, waist measurement, bioelectrical impedance

Lately there has been much discussion about the relationship between weight and health. Your waist measurement is useful for assessing distribution of weight over the body. The bioelectrical impedance measure is similar to a set of bathroom scales, but they measure the amount of fat in the body.

## Blood sample

We would be very grateful if you would agree to provide us with a sample of blood. Analysis of the blood samples will tell us a lot about the health of the population. You are, of course, free to choose not to give a blood sample and the nurse will ask for your written permission before a blood sample is taken.

This part of the survey involves a small amount of blood (no more than 20ml or four teaspoons) being taken from your arm by a qualified nurse.



# Frequently asked questions

## What will happen to the blood sample I give?

The blood sample will be stored at a secure facility, your name and address will not be attached to the sample and so your sample will remain confidential. Your blood will not be analysed immediately, but will be available to scientists for scientific analysis. Any analysis will have to be approved by an independent committee set up by the ESRC. The stored blood will not be available for commercial purposes.

Before being used in future research, some of the information we have collected in this survey (but not any details which would identify you) may be attached to the sample. You can withdraw your consent to store your blood at any time, without giving any reason, by asking the investigators in writing for your blood to be removed from storage and destroyed.

When the sample is tested for research, it will no longer be possible to link it to you, so you will not be told the results of the testing. It will not be possible to remove your results from reports, as the results cannot be linked to you.

## Will any genetic tests be made?

The anonymous samples may, in the future, be tested for DNA or genetics. Any analysis like this could not be linked to you and no names of individuals will ever be revealed or identified in the presentation of the results. The blood samples will not be tested for the HIV (AIDS) virus and will not be available for paternity testing, life insurance, mortgage applications or police records.

## If I have any other questions?

We hope this leaflet answers the questions you may have, and that it shows the importance of the survey. If you have any other questions or concerns about the nurse measurements, results or samples please do not hesitate to ring one of the contacts listed below. Your co-operation is very much appreciated.

## Contacts

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