

Svensson Heights Area Public Health PFAS Investigation: Voluntary Blood Testing Program

How do I get a blood test?

Step 1 – Get the background information

It is important to know the limitations of testing. Testing is not being actively recommended because the result will not be of assistance to your GP in understanding or diagnosing any current medical conditions you may have. The test only has value in comparing your exposure to an Australian average – and based on our preliminary information we already think that your exposure will have been higher than average. It is recommended that you read the fact sheet before deciding whether to go to your GP and discuss with them whether or not to undertake a blood test. The Svensson Heights PFAS fact sheet is available at:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/pollution/management/investigation-pfas/bundaberg-svensson-heights>

Step 2 – Confirm you are eligible for a free blood test

Anyone who lives, works or attends school or child care in the Svensson Heights PFAS Investigation Area, or who has done so for at least 3 months in the past, is eligible for a free Queensland Health blood test. Refer to the Bundaberg Regional Council website at www.bundaberg.qld.gov.au/pfas for a map of the affected area.

Step 3 – Complete the paperwork

Completion of a short questionnaire is required to help your doctor assess your potential exposure to PFAS. Please complete the questionnaire at your GP's surgery, or before you attend. The short questionnaire / consent form is also available at:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/assets/documents/pollution/management/pfas/bundaberg-svensson-heights-blood-test-questionnaire.pdf>

The Wide Bay Public Health Unit will need to collate information and results from the Voluntary Blood Testing Program. This will enable monitoring of the program and assessment of overall public health risk, and enable the Unit to provide summary information to the community, without reference to any individual. Your personal information and test result will be kept confidential, with your results provided only to your GP and the Wide Bay Public Health Unit. When you complete the questionnaire, please indicate your consent to the information and test result being provided to the Wide Bay Public Health Unit.

Step 4 – Visit your GP for a pre-test consultation

As with any other blood test, you must go to your GP to discuss having the test. While the blood test for eligible people will be provided free by Queensland Health, your GP may choose to charge you for their service. Bring your completed questionnaire or complete it at the time of your

appointment with your doctor - this will help your GP to make an assessment during your consultation and they may want to keep a copy.

If you decide to have a blood test, the GP will then provide you with a laboratory blood test request form (on which the doctor should note “**Public Health PFAS Investigation**”) to have your blood taken. **Free blood testing will only be provided by Queensland Health, with blood collection undertaken at the Bundaberg Hospital blood collection area.**

Testing is also available privately through your GP but it is **very** expensive (over \$500). Even though your doctor will be using a private lab request form, do **NOT** go a private lab collection centre – unless you wish to pay for the test yourself.

Step 5 – Have your blood sample collected

To have your blood sample done, you will need to visit the Pathology Department Collection Centre at Bundaberg Hospital, in Bourbong Street.

Take **BOTH** the completed questionnaire and specially marked blood test request form to the Hospital to have your blood taken.

BOTH these documents are needed **so you are not charged for the test.**

HOSPITAL BLOOD SAMPLE CLINIC HOURS ARE 12 – 4:30 PM MONDAY to FRIDAY

Directions to Pathology, via Bundaberg Hospital Main Entrance:

- Turn right from the main foyer, where you will find a lift and a set of stairs going up to the first floor. The pathology department is on the first floor [above the Hospital Pharmacy Dept].

Directions to Pathology, via Bourbong Street (Outpatients Entrance):

- Enter building and turn left, where you will see a set of stairs to the first floor. The pathology department is on the first floor [above the Hospital Pharmacy Dept].

Should you need help with directions, please ask a Red Cross volunteer, located at the desk near the entrance door in the main foyer.

Step 6 – Visit your GP for a post-test consultation

The blood test results will be sent directly to your GP around 2 – 3 weeks from when your blood sample was taken (depending on laboratory capacity – this is a highly specialized test). It is recommended that after your blood sample is taken, you get in touch with your family doctor’s practice in 2 – 3 weeks time to check if your result is back and make an appointment. When you visit your GP for the results, they will discuss what they may mean for you and how they compare with the general population.