

ATHENA COVID-19 Study

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Why Support the Queensland Health ATHENA (The **A**ustralians **T**ogether **H**ealth **I**Niti**A**tive) COVID-19 Linkage Study?

The ATHENA COVID-19 Study will examine patient health information from general practices, hospitals and registries from approximately 1000 patients previously testing positive to COVID-19.

- The study will answer vital questions about which medical conditions, medicines and other health characteristics which are more likely to make people to get mild, moderate, or severe COVID-19 infections in our population.
- Most of the information we have on COVID-19 comes from overseas populations. Although helpful, this may be very different to what happens in Australia. We therefore need to collect local information to help us understand how COVID-19 behaves in an Australian population.
- Your health information held within general practice holds key additional information to helping us better understand how COVID-19 impacts our population. Combining them with any health records you have within Queensland Health provides us with an even greater resource to help researchers understand COVID-19. We need your permission to ask your GP clinic to send Queensland Health your patient file and to allow researchers to analyse the combined health information
- The health information provided to health researchers that are external to Queensland Health is de-identified. De-identification means removing identifying information from the data and samples i.e. you will be known to these researchers by a code and not by your name.
- The study has the support of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, (RACGP), Queensland Health, and all the Queensland Primary Health Networks.
- The study has a registered Human Ethics Committee approval and is compliant with all privacy legislation.
- Our study is supported by an experienced team of university and clinical researchers across the fields of data analysis and Epidemiology (the study of population health).

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Frequently Asked Questions

What are the risks of participating?

There is a potential risk to your privacy and health information security if there is a breach of Queensland Health's privacy and data security practices. This has a low likelihood of occurring as Queensland Health works within strict standards for the transfer of information from your GP to the Queensland Health. The transfer of health information follows standard policies and procedures for electronic security as per health services, Queensland Health and the Department of Health (State) data security and management.

For some participants, being asked to recall the events of when they or their relatives were infected might trigger emotional distress. If this occurs, we do have mental health support processes in place to help. This includes, where appropriate and with your permission, contacting your general practitioner and/or treating physician, and your local mental health support services.

What is my Health Information?

You or your child's health information held within a general practice or an authorised health service such as a hospital or specialist clinic, may include medical and personal information including information about past medical history including hospital stays, treatment regimes, specific diagnoses, current or past medications, family history, personal details such as name, age, address, date of birth and Medicare number. Test results may include blood tests, weight, height and blood pressure readings.

What Health information from your GP is used by the ATHENA Study?

- The health information we require are the coded or 'itemised' clinical entries made by your GP. These generally include information such as your past medical history, types of medications you may be, or are taking, past medical tests undertaken, recorded observations such as height and weight, cardiovascular risk and any allergies..
- Due to practice software constraints, these coded information cannot be exported separately from any large non-coded documents that may have also been uploaded to your file by your general practice. Examples of these include scanned letters sent from other health providers
- These non-coded documents will not be used for research and therefore once the coded information which we use has been extracted, your entire patient record will be deleted.

In summary: Prior to any research interrogation, all non-coded clinical entries – e.g. scanned documents, free-text progress notes etc – are permanently deleted. The ATHENA COVID-19 Study can and will only utilise the coded information as stated above from your GP health record. All other information received at Queensland Health from your GP will be deleted and not used for research.

Will I be charged anything or compensated for my participation?

No - there is no charge for participation nor is there any compensation to you by participating.

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How can I find out about any study results?

The first set of results are expected by October 2021. Full details will be available to you on the website: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/research-reports/research-projects/athena-covid-19>

If I have any questions or wish to know more about the study, how do I do

this? You can either go the ATHENA COVID-19 website <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/research-reports/research-projects/athena-covid-19> or contact a member of the ATHENA COVID-19 team on Tel: (07) 3184 4167 or via email: ATHENACV19@health.qld.gov.au

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