



How to identify Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients

All clients of health services should be asked if they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the process of routine data collection.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, collection of Aboriginality will play a major role in identifying and notifying at risk communities where outbreaks or clusters of COVID-19 transmissions occur in higher populated Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander geographical areas.

Why is identification an important question?

Main reasons:

- Deciding if a person is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander based on looks/features/appearance is not reliable. The only sure way to find out is to ask.
- Aboriginal people are most at risk of COVID-19 (particularly those over 50 years of age with one or more chronic medical conditions and those living in rural and remote Aboriginal communities).

Why ask?

It is best to ask all clients if they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Remember that identification is based on their self-identity and not their physical features/appearance.

Identification can be asked by the practice staff members who are the first point of contact for clients **OR** through a written form that clients can complete before having their screening done.

How to ask?

You can **verbally** ask all clients 'Do you identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?'

or you can include the **following text** in a form to all clients when updating client information:

Do you identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

- No
- Yes, Aboriginal
- Yes, Torres Strait Islander
- Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

More information

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/national-guidelines-collecting-health-data-sets/contents/table-of-contents>

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This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.