

Why do we collect information on client ethnicity in primary care?



A person's ethnicity or cultural background may place them at an increased risk of certain health conditions. Knowing a client's ethnicity allows healthcare staff to ask the right questions and advise them about health risks, vaccinations and tests. It's important to record this information in your clinical software for all your clients.

How do I ask for this information?

Start with an introductory statement, such as:

"I notice we are missing some information in your patient record"

Emphasise that you ask for this information from all your clients.

Some example questions you could ask are:

"Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?"

"In what country were you born?"

"What cultural group do you belong to?"

"What languages do you speak at home?"

What if my client is resistant to providing this information?



Clients may not understand why you need to collect this information, or may have experienced stigma or discrimination because of their ethnicity or background.

The following statements may help:

"We collect this information from all our clients to make sure we can provide you with the best care"

"Your background and family history can put you at risk of some illnesses"

"It helps our doctors and nurses offer you the right tests"

"All your personal information is stored securely and confidentially"

What else should I be aware of?

- Consider the practice environment and client privacy when asking questions.
- Your software may have limitations on how ethnicity can be recorded. Make sure you record this information in a way the client is comfortable with.
- Allow time for your client to answer. Remember, English may not be their first language. Check to see if an interpreter would be helpful.

Ask, never assume.

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For more information visit <https://www.doherty.edu.au/viralhepatitis/heplogicresources/asking-about-ethnicity>

