



Don't guess

Aboriginal?



Do ask

Torres Strait Islander?



What you do is important

For more information, contact:
National Centre for Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Statistics
Free call 1800 633 216

Do you know?

Please always ask:
*"Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait
Islander origin?"*

It's a very important question to ask **all** patients, even if you don't think they look Indigenous.

Why?

You cannot rely on using a patient's appearance to determine whether he or she is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin or not. The only sure way to find out is to ask all patients.

Accurate health statistics are a key to knowing whether the health of Australians is improving or not. Information you collect assists in planning the most suitable health services for all.

If patients of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin are correctly identified, health care providers will be able to offer services specifically designed for them.

How do I ask?

Be sensitive

A patient has the right to choose whether to identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. You should record their answer as stated. They will appreciate your respect of their choice.

Be confident

There is nothing discriminatory about asking this question, so it is best to ask the question in a confident, matter-of-fact way.

Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

(For persons of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, mark both 'yes' boxes.)

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

Use the exact wording

The wording of a question influences a patient's response. For consistency, please ask, 'Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?' with every patient. Of course for a child, or a patient unable to respond, you would ask an accompanying responsible adult 'Is (name) of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?'

Respect their privacy

You are no doubt aware of the need to respect your patients' privacy. You can assure them that personal information, such as Indigenous status, is collected subject to the Privacy Act which ensures that this information is protected and used appropriately. If patients are concerned about privacy, you can refer them to the website of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, www.privacy.gov.au.

A combined effort

You are not alone in asking this question. Staff from many organisations (such as employment agencies, schools and funeral services) will also ask for this information to ensure good policy development, the best possible funding allocation and customised services for all Australians.



Thank you for taking the time to ask all patients this question.