Participant information for the WellKiwis household cohort study

WellKiwis
influenza study

What information is included in this participant information brochure?

This brochure is to give you information to help you decide whether you want to take part as a WellKiwis participant. It includes the reason why we are doing the study, what we are asking you to do, the risks and benefits of the study, and what happens when the study is finished. Please read this sheet carefully and discuss with your family, whānau, friends, or healthcare providers before deciding whether to continue with the study or not.

It is entirely up to you to decide if you want to take part in WellKiwis. You can stop taking part in the study at any time – no reason needs to be given. Stopping your participation in the study will not affect your current or future health care.

What is the WellKiwis household cohort study?

The WellKiwis Household Cohort Study is a seven-year study which aims to understand the immunity or protection people have against influenza (flu) through infection or vaccination. It also helps us to know how the flu virus spreads from an infected person to uninfected persons in a household.

Findings of WellKiwis will help the New Zealand government make choices about flu vaccine recommendations and make decisions about how to reduce the impact of the spread of flu in the community. The study will also provide information that can be used to improve flu vaccines in the future and better prepare for pandemics.

What are we asking you to do in this study?

Study activities during 2021-2027 will be very similar to the SHIVERS-II&III studies if you participated in either of those previously (note: for those SHIVERS-II participants without at least one household member aged 19 years or younger, the study duration will be two years in 2023-2024).

You will be asked to do the following activities:

1. Enrolment/baseline blood sample

CONSENT: In the study invitation message/letter that you receive, there is a link to an online consent form, sign and return electronically (details are on the consent form). If you have difficulties with this link, please let our team know. If you want a hard copy consent form, you can call us on 0800 493555 (08004WELLKIWI), or email us at WellKiwis@esr.cri.nz, and we will mail it to you with a pre-paid envelope included.

ENROLMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: When you complete the online consent, you will be automatically directed to the enrolment questionnaire, which will take less than 10 minutes to complete. If you have not done this in a few days, we will remind you by email/ text (including a link to the questionnaire) or by phone. You will be asked to update those details including contact information, vaccination, health, and influenza-like illness (ILI) status. We might check your GP records, your workplace influenza vaccination records and NZ health registries for details necessary for the study.

BASELINE BLOOD: For those participants who have not provided any blood sample(s) previously, soon after consenting, a baseline blood sample will be collected.

- We will email/text/call you about how to have your samples collected either by our clinical staff or at Southern Community Laboratory's collection rooms. You can also get information by visiting our study website (http://wellkiwis.co.nz/).
- A phlebotomist (a person trained to collect blood) will take a blood from you. We may ask for a further sample in cases initial samples are not sufficient for testing.
- The volume of blood depends on age: 15 mL (a tablespoon) from those aged 5 years and over; 8 mL from those aged 2-5 years; 4 mL for those aged 6 months to 2 years; less than 4 ml (less than a teaspoon) for those under 6 months.
- You are welcome to perform a karakia at any sample collection.

2. Follow-up during the flu season (usually April-September)

ILI (INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS) SURVEYS: We will send you weekly email/text messages to ask whether you had a flu vaccine, and if you have been sick with cough, fever or other respiratory symptoms.

POST-VACCINE BLOOD: If you report to us that you had a flu vaccine, a blood sample will be collected 3-6 weeks after the vaccination.

NOSE SWAB: If you report to us that you have a flu-like illness, such as cough and fever, our clinical staff may ask you to take a nasal swab to test for flu and other respiratory viruses including the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19. If your swab is positive for the flu virus, we will contact you, usually within 48 hours. Results for other respiratory viruses may take up to two weeks and will be reported via email. All results will be sent to your GP.

If the swab shows no flu virus, then we will let you know, and there is nothing that needs to be done further.

POST-FLU BLOOD: If your swab is positive for the flu virus, we will work with you to collect a pair of blood samples from you. The first blood will be taken 1-2 weeks after illness onset and another 4-7 weeks later.

CLOSE MONITORING FOR YOUR HOUSEHOLD: When the first member of your household with ILI tests positive for the flu virus, our clinical staff will call and talk to you about close monitoring for your household. All of your household members will need to take a swab every 3rd day until there are two consecutive negative results. In addition, clinical staff will take a pair of bloods for each household member (one shortly after the positive flu result and another 4-7 weeks later). All household members will be monitored for flu-like symptoms until no one is showing any ILI symptoms (sometimes up to 28 days).

3. Follow-up after the flu season (usually October-March)

ANNUAL BLOOD: We will collect one annual blood sample for each participant. It will be used as a post-season blood for the current year and pre-season blood for the following year.

ANNUAL QUESTIONNAIRE: We will carry out one annual questionnaire during the off-season, to get any updates on your contact details, health and conditions associated with getting flu, as well as your feedback on the study.

STUDY UPDATES: We will keep you informed about the study throughout the year.

THANK YOU VOUCHER: You will receive a $30 eGift card after each blood or swab sample collection to recognize your time and effort.

What are the benefits of taking part in this study for me?

You will find out if you were ill from the flu or another respiratory virus during the winter. The study can help you to find ways to reduce the impact of illness due to the infection. The study will contribute to knowledge about immune responses to the flu virus and how the flu virus spreads. This will inform measures to better prepare us for and to respond to future pandemics.

Who is involved in running the WellKiwis study?

The Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) is the leading agency for the WellKiwis Household Cohort Study. It is also called SHIVERS-IV (the fourth iteration of the Southern Hemisphere Influenza and Vaccine Effectiveness Research and Surveillance programme). SHIVERS is a long series of research on the influenza virus and vaccine.

Here are some other important details of the WellKiwis Household Cohort study:

- The WellKiwis Hjousehold Cohort Study is a part of a large international collaboration funded by the United States National Institutes of Health (US NIH) through the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis.
- WellKiwis is multi-agency collaboration including your general practice (GP), Te Awakairangi Health Network and others in Wellington, ESR, the Universities of Auckland

and Otago, Te Whatu Ora, Capital, Coast, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa, Wellington SCL, the Malaghan Institute and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

- The New Zealand Health & Disability Ethics Committee has approved WellKiwis (NTX11.11.102.AM58).
- This study is observational clinical research. No medications or interventions are tested in this study.
- Study clinical staff will provide you with public health advice to support you to lessen the impact of the flu/COVID-19 infection.
- If you require clinical care and management, please contact your own doctor.

What testing is done on my samples? And where?

Blood samples and swabs will be sent to ESR's National Influenza Centre at Wallaceville, Upper Hutt.

- Swabs will be tested for flu and other respiratory viruses (SARS-CoV-2, respiratory syncytial virus, rhinovirus, enterovirus, parainfluenza virus types 1-3, adenovirus and human metapneumovirus).
- Blood samples will be tested for antibodies, other immune cells, and specific genes that associate with immune responses. Some of these immune tests will be done at Wallaceville and at the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research in Wellington. A small amount of your samples will be sent to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, USA for more complex testing that cannot be performed here. None of these tests being done would be important to your healthcare, and we do not provide individual results for these samples.
- Your samples may be tested to help in the response to public health issues, such as understanding the body's immune response to a new influenza virus or other pandemic viral threats.
- Your samples will be stored securely for 10 years after the study ends, and then will be disposed of safely.
- You may hold beliefs about a sacred and shared value of all or any tissue samples removed. The cultural issues associated with sending your samples overseas and/or storing your tissue should be discussed with your family/whānau as appropriate. There are a range of views held by Māori around these issues; some iwi disagree with storage of samples citing whakapapa and advise their people to consult before participating in research where this occurs. However, it is acknowledged that individuals have the right to choose.

How is my privacy protected?

What happens to the information you provide?

Your test results and information are confidential:

- Your GP will receive the results done on your swab which may show if a virus has caused your flu-like symptoms. Swab results will be sent to your GP about two weeks after the swab is taken.

- Your GP will not receive the results done on your blood samples as these results are not for clinical purposes. The blood tests need to use samples across a number of years, and therefore the results may not be available for several years.
- Your samples will be labelled with a unique study number without any identifiable information when sent overseas, so that you cannot be identified.
- We need to use your personal information (name, date of birth and contact details) to get in touch with you and to ensure that your GP can provide you with results from the tests being done in the study. In addition to study researchers having access to this information, only the study funder and their agents, the ethics committees that approved the study, and regulatory agencies could access study records for the sole purpose of checking the accuracy of the recorded information.
- Study communications will mainly be electronic (email, text messages, and online surveys), and the study cannot guarantee the security of electronic responses to study communications.
- You have the right to ask for your personal study information and to ask for that information to be corrected, if you find an error.
- If you decide to withdraw from the study, we may process the information and samples collected up to the point when you withdraw.
- The study staff will request information from NZ health registries and practice medical records to validate or complete missing information on your vaccination and respiratory illness/conditions and non-health related information such as demographics. Additionally, we may check your workplace influenza/COVID-19 vaccination records to validate or complete missing influenza/COVID-19 vaccination information.
- This study will comply with all New Zealand laws governing ethical research, and also the Privacy Act 2020.
- This study has a Certificate of Confidentiality from the United States National Institutes of Health (US NIH) to protect your privacy in the following ways. The researchers can use this Certificate to legally refuse to give information that may identify you in any US federal, state, or local civil, criminal, administrative, legislative, or other proceedings, for example, if there is a court subpoena. The researchers will use this Certificate to resist any demands for information that would identify you, except for reporting of notifiable diseases to the New Zealand Ministry of Health.
- You can also contact us to get the overall study results. It may be many years before these results are available.
- Study results on all participants will be grouped together without any of your personal information provided to health authorities, published in medical journals, and made available on the WellKiwis website (http://wellkiwis.co.nz/). Information collected for the study on participants will be posted on the study funder website (US NIH). No personal identifiable information will be published.
- All study records are confidential. They will be stored securely at ESR and will be destroyed 10 years after the study ends.

What if something goes wrong?

There are very few risks associated with this study. Taking swabs and blood samples are common and safe procedures. Nose/nasopharyngeal swabs may cause brief pain, itchy nose, eye watering, or sneezing. Throat swabbing could cause some discomfort, coughing, or gagging. The risk from blood collection is usually minor, such as redness or bruising around the site where the blood is taken. The procedure may also cause infection and some discomfort. We minimise risks by having trained staff take your samples.

If you were injured in this study, which is unlikely, you would be eligible to apply for compensation from ACC just as you would be if you were injured in an accident at work or at home. This does not mean that your claim will automatically be accepted. You will have to lodge a claim with ACC, which may take some time to assess. If your claim is accepted, you will receive funding to assist in your recovery. If you have private health or life insurance, you may wish to check with your insurer that taking part in this study will not affect your coverage.

Who can I talk to about this study?

- If you any questions about the study, you can contact Dr. Sue Huang and WellKiwis study staff at 0800 493555 (08004WELLKIWI) or email WellKiwis@esr.cri.nz.
- If you want to talk to someone who isn't involved with the study, you can contact a Health and Disability Advocate. Freephone 0800 555 050.

We thank you for your time and consideration of taking part in this important population health study.

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This study is being conducted at the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) at 66 Ward Street, Upper Hutt with New Zealand ethics approval (NTX11.11.102.AM58).
It is a multi-agency collaboration including participating general practices in Wellington, ESR, Te Awakairangi Health Network, participating general practices, Regional Public Health, the Capital Coast and Hutt Valley District Health Boards, the Universities of Otago and Auckland, Malaghan Institute of Medical Research and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (SJCRH). It is a part of a large international collaboration funded by United States National Institutes of Health through SJCRH in Memphis USA.