

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Parent,

This is to introduce to you the plans for the eight year follow-up visit for the W.A. Pregnancy Cohort Study (known as the Raine Study). We have decided to see the children again between the ages of seven and a half and eight and a half years of age. Our specific aim in seeing the children at this age is to see if we can determine the influence of various factors, occurring during pregnancy and early life, on blood pressure variability in childhood. You will remember that we have measured the children's blood pressure at each of the assessments over the years. At this visit we would like to measure blood pressure a little more comprehensively. We are also interested to find out how common iron deficiency is in Western Australia.

High blood pressure in adult life is common and, if untreated, can lead to diseases of the blood vessels, including coronary heart disease and stroke (cardiovascular disease). High blood pressure is currently viewed as a long term disease that starts in middle-age and gets progressively worse. It is most commonly thought to be due to the interaction between an inherited tendency and unfavourable environmental or lifestyle factors in adult life. However, a group of scientists from around the world believe that high blood pressure in adulthood may be due to factors occurring during pregnancy and early life. The Raine Study provides a unique opportunity for research in this area.

You may be aware that high blood pressure is one of a number of factors that can lead to cardiovascular disease. People who have diabetes, and people who have a high cholesterol level, for example, are also at increased risk. In order to understand the role of blood pressure more fully we need to assess these other factors as well. Because high blood pressure tends to run in families we would like to measure blood pressure and do some tests with you, the parent(s), as well.

Once again you will be invited to bring your child to the Institute for a clinical examination. This will be similar to the previous examinations your child has had. In addition to the physical examination, measurements, and developmental assessment, we will be offering an exercise test, a test for diabetes, a test for iron deficiency and a test for levels of fats in the blood. We will be offering to measure blood pressure and test parent(s) for diabetes, iron deficiency and levels of fats in the blood, as well. With these tests it is important for us to collect this information on children with and without a family history of cardiovascular disease.

The exercise test involves your child riding a specially designed exercise bicycle for about ten minutes while we measure blood pressure at various intervals. Your child will be asked to make a reasonable effort, without over-exerting himself/herself. Children will be asked to perform a lung function test, where he/she blows through a spirometer, as well. There are a few children who will be excluded from doing the test due to a health problem.

The next part of the study involves a blood test for you and your child. The test will be for levels of fats and iron in the blood, as well as for diabetes. All the blood we need will be taken in one go, up to 20 mls in total. We will discuss the blood test with you when you come in for your appointment and if you wish to have it done we will organise for you to visit a pathology laboratory at your convenience.

It may be necessary for us to access the medical records of some of the children in the study. We will only do this when we have your signed consent to do so. All information we have about you and your child is held in the strictest confidence. We will inform you of the results of all tests. If any of the screening tests indicate you or your child may have a problem we will refer you to your General Practitioner.

We will be asking you for separate permission for each part of the study so that you can feel free to participate in the study without feeling pressured to agree to it all. You may, of course, withdraw your child at any stage without prejudicing your child's right and access to the best medical attention available at the hospital. We will also be asking your child for permission to take part. We have enclosed an information sheet for your child to read. We would like you to discuss the tests with your child before you come in. We will answer any questions you have when we see you, however, please feel free to phone to discuss any aspect of the study.

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