

## **CLSA COVID-19 Antibody Study: Dried Blood Spot PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

As a longstanding participant in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA), we are inviting you to participate in the CLSA COVID-19 Antibody Study, a study in which we ask you to provide blood samples using a self-collection kit to determine the presence of antibodies and other markers responsible for COVID-19 and immunity, in your blood. The information you provide will allow researchers to identify the percentage of the population that has been exposed to COVID-19. At this point in time we do not have good estimates of how many people with symptoms and without symptoms have been infected by this virus. There is an urgent need to understand how much of the general population has been exposed to virus that causes COVID-19.

We are able to collect these blood samples from CLSA participants through a partnership with the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Immunity Task Force ([www.covid19immunitytaskforce.ca](http://www.covid19immunitytaskforce.ca)). The Canadian COVID-19 Immunity Task Force was established by the Government of Canada to support research to make evidence-based decisions to keep our citizens safe. By participating in the CLSA COVID-19 Antibody study, you will be helping us understand how the virus is affecting Canadians.

The CLSA COVID-19 Antibody Study is led by Dr. Parminder Raina from McMaster University and involves many researchers from universities across Canada. The overarching goal of the CLSA COVID-19 Antibody Study is to permit better understanding about how widespread COVID-19 infection is in Canada among older adults by looking at the presence of antibodies in a small sample of blood. The antibody testing involves collecting the blood sample at two time points (six months apart) over the next 12 months.

Analysing blood samples collected from participants will allow us to determine if you have developed antibodies to the virus that causes COVID-19. The presence of antibodies in the blood means that you have been infected by the virus at some time in the past, even though you may not have been aware of this infection or experienced any symptoms.

### **Here is what you can expect to happen if you agree to participate in the CLSA-COVID-19 Antibody Study**

- You will receive a package via Fedex that will include detailed information about how to self-collect a blood sample. Briefly, the process requires you to prick a finger, allow a blood drop to form, and then apply the drop of blood to a device that has a special paper. Once the blood sample has been collected, the device is sent back to the research team for analysis via pre-paid Fedex.
- You will be asked to complete a short questionnaire on the same day you self-collect the blood sample. The questionnaire may be completed online or on by telephone.
- We may contact you again in approximately six months to arrange for a second blood sample collection, which will include the same process as described above. The second blood sample

collection is contingent on how widespread the infection is based on the results of the first blood sample. If the spread of the infection is extremely low, then we may not proceed with collection of the blood samples in six months.

- Results of the antibody test will be made available to you by email or mail following a review and interpretation of all of the study data with public health experts. Test results will be accompanied by information to help you understand what they mean. COVID-19 antibody testing detects the presence of antibodies made in response to COVID-19 infection. A positive result tells you about an infection that happened in the past but will not tell you if you are currently infected. These results will not be available for at least 3 months after the sample is provided.

It is important to note that the testing used to detect antibodies for the COVID-19 virus is not a diagnostic test to determine if you are currently infected and has no clinical meaning for you or your doctor. If test results show that you do have antibodies, then you were likely infected with this virus at some time in the past and may or may not have some immunity. It is currently not known whether the presence of antibodies means you are protected against reinfection. The level of immunity and how long immunity lasts are not yet known.

**There are some risks in providing a blood sample:**

- You may feel mild “pinprick” pain from the device lancet (needle) and/or have a small bruise on your finger. A retractable safety lancet (needle) is used to eliminate the risk of accidental injury from the needle.
- There is a risk of poking a nerve end which is associated with increased pain and skin sensitivity at the puncture site.
- Every effort will be made to prevent these risks by providing clear instructions for how to take the sample properly.

**There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study:**

- Your participation in the CLSA COVID-19 Antibody Study will provide scientists and public health officials important information about the COVID-19 pandemic. This information will help government officials, policymakers and researchers gain important insight and shape the direction of the country’s response to COVID-19 — and help keep us safe.
- Your participation in this research study will not involve any costs to you except the time that it takes you to take part in the study. The cost of shipping the samples to the CLSA is covered by the CLSA.

**Some final important information about the CLSA-COVID-19 Antibody Study:**

- Your agreement to participate in the CLSA COVID-19 Antibody Study is entirely voluntary.

- Your decision to participate in the CLSA COVID-19 Antibody Study does not affect your participation in the CLSA study that you have participated since 2012-2015.
- If you initially agree to participate in the CLSA COVID-19 Antibody Study, you can change your mind at any time by contacting us by email at [info@clsa-elcv.ca](mailto:info@clsa-elcv.ca) or telephone at 1-866-999-8303.

**We will protect all the data you provide to us:**

- When you consented to participate in the CLSA (2012-2015) you were given information about how the CLSA will protect any data collected. The CLSA-COVID-19 Antibody Study is a sub study of the CLSA, as such the CLSA will protect any information and blood samples collected as part of the CLSA COVID-19 Antibody Study as we do for all CLSA participant information and blood samples.
- Blood samples collected from you are:
  - Labelled with a unique study identification number, not your name, at the time of collection (the collection device is pre-labelled). This means the sample has be 'de-identified'.
  - The samples will be stored in freezers prior to performing analysis on them. These freezers are located at McMaster University in a location that has security 24 hours a day.
  - Researchers that are given access to your de-identified sample for testing and analysis do not have access to your personal information, only the unique identification number associated with your sample.
- The data collected as part of the CLSA-COVID-19 Antibody Study will be shared for research purposes as per CLSA data sharing polices. You can read this information on the CLSA website at <https://www.clsa-elcv.ca/participants/information-documents> or request a copy of this information by contacting us by email at [info@clsa-elcv.ca](mailto:info@clsa-elcv.ca) or telephone at 1-866-999-8303.
- Every effort will be made to keep the information you provide private, but risk of accidental disclosure is possible.

**If you have any questions:**

- For questions about the study please contact the CLSA Information Line at 1-866-999-8303 or [info@clsa-elcv.ca](mailto:info@clsa-elcv.ca).
- If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Ethics Board associated with your region:

**BRITISH COLUMBIA  
BURNABY**

Dr. Jeff Toward, Director  
Office of Research Ethics  
Simon Fraser University  
8888 University Drive  
Multi-Tenant Facility  
Burnaby BC V5A 1S6  
Phone: (778) 782-6593  
E-mail: [jtoward@sfu.ca](mailto:jtoward@sfu.ca)

**VANCOUVER**

University of British Columbia  
Office of Research Services  
6190 Agronomy Road  
Vancouver BC V6T 1Z3  
Phone: toll free 1-877-822-8298  
Phone: local (604) 822-8598

**ONTARIO**

**HAMILTON**  
Office of the Chair  
Hamilton Integrated Research  
Ethics Board (HiREB)  
293 Wellington Street North  
Hamilton ON L8L 8E7  
Phone: (905) 521-2100 ext.  
42013

**OTTAWA**

Chair, Bruyère Research Ethics  
Board  
43 Bruyère Street  
Ottawa ON K1N 5C8  
Phone: (613) 562-6262 ext. 4003  
E-mail: [REB@bruyere.org](mailto:REB@bruyere.org)

**VICTORIA**

Human Research Ethics Office of  
Research Services  
University of Victoria  
Administrative Services Building  
(ASB), Room B202  
PO Box 1700 Stn CSC  
3800 Finnerty Road  
Victoria BC V8W 2Y2  
Phone: (250) 472-4545

Vancouver Island Health Authority  
Research Ethics and Compliance  
Office  
Queen Alexandra Centre, Main  
Building Room 205  
2400 Arbutus Road  
Victoria BC V8N 1V7  
Phone: (250) 519-6726

**NOVA SCOTIA**

**HALIFAX**  
Director  
Office of Research Ethics  
Administration  
Dalhousie University  
6299 South Street  
2nd Floor, Suite 231  
Halifax NS B3H 4H6  
Phone: (902)-494-1462

**NEWFOUNDLAND**

**ST. JOHN'S**  
Health Research Ethics Board  
2nd Floor, Bonaventure Place  
95 Bonaventure Avenue  
St. John's NL A1B 2X5  
Phone: (709) 777-6974

**ALBERTA  
CALGARY**

Conjoint Health Research Ethics  
Board  
University of Calgary  
Phone: (403) 220-7990

**MANITOBA  
WINNIPEG**

Bannatyne Campus  
Research Ethics Board  
University of Manitoba  
P126 Pathology Building  
770 Bannatyne Avenue  
Winnipeg MB R3E 0W3  
Phone: (204) 789-3883

**QUEBEC  
MONTREAL**

Ms. Ilde Lepore  
Senior Ethics Administrator  
McGill Institutional Review Board  
McGill University Faculty of  
Medicine  
McIntyre Medical Building  
#633-3655 Promenade Sir William  
Osler  
Montreal QC H3G 1Y6  
Phone: (514) 398-8302  
E-mail: [ilde.lepore@mcgill.ca](mailto:ilde.lepore@mcgill.ca)

**SHERBROOKE**

Comité d'éthique de la recherche  
du CIUSSS de l'Estrie - CHUS  
CIUSS de l'Estrie-CHUS  
3001, 12e Avenue Nord  
Sherbrooke QC J1H 5N4  
Phone: (819) 346-1110, poste  
12856  
E-mail: [ethique.recherche.ciussse-  
chus@ssss.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:ethique.recherche.ciussse-chus@ssss.gouv.qc.ca)