

Culture counts

Gathering information about cultural origin in your practice

Why does culture count?

Everyone's culture is important to us. Whether we are born in Australia or overseas, our cultural background influences the way we understand health.

This includes our understanding of preventive care and treatment, how we access health care, and how we interact with our healthcare provider.

A person's culture includes their traditional practices, religious practices and beliefs, and the language(s) they speak. These are influenced by family and social groups.

Understanding and respecting your patients' cultural background can help you to better support your patients' health and wellbeing.

Gathering information

Everyone in the practice needs to understand their role in gathering patient information.

By **gathering this information** we can provide better and more equitable health care to our patients.

It is important to ask for information in a sensitive and respectful way.

A sample question that could be used is "What cultural background or ethnicity do you identify with?"

The RACGP's *Standards for general practices* (including C2.1 and C7.1) encourage the gathering of cultural information to support patients' rights for respectful care.

How you can help

Your **patient registration and booking forms** can gather information such as:

- ✓ country of birth
- ✓ ethnicity or cultural background
- ✓ if an interpreter is required (and if there is a preferred gender for the interpreter)
- ✓ preferred language
- ✓ date of arrival in Australia (if born overseas)
- ✓ religion.

Patients can decline to provide this information if they wish. Some people have valid concerns about sharing this information. It is recommended to **include a 'prefer not to say' option**.

Communication

All patients have a right to understand the information and recommendations they receive from their practitioners.

Always **engage a qualified interpreter** if your patient does not speak English or if you do not speak their language fluently.

Encourage your patients to ask for an interpreter when attending other health services such as a pharmacy, radiology, allied health or specialists.

Find out more: www.tisnational.gov.au



Display this poster within your practice

Everyone's culture is important to us

Help us to provide the best health care for you and your family.





Whether you are born in Australia or overseas, we want to know about your cultural origin.

We may ask you about your:

country of birth	language
ethnicity	religion

This helps us understand and respect your background so we can better support your health and wellbeing.

You can choose what information you give us. The information is kept private - only your healthcare team will see it.



Let us know if you need an interpreter.





Scan this QR code to access the poster and our other multicultural health resources

Cultural information can help practices to better tailor information to their patients' care needs.

Understanding the cultural diversity within a practice can help practice staff to communicate more effectively and understand their patients' health concerns.

Always keep patient information private

It is important to ensure patients understand that all the information collected by your practice will be kept private.

Sources

1. *Standards for general practice (5th edition)* - RACGP
2. *User guide for health service organisations providing care for patients from migrant and refugee backgrounds* - Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

Acknowledgement

This resource has been adapted from *Culture Counts* Fact Sheet developed by Brisbane South PHN.

Get in touch

1300 653 169

info@primaryhealthtas.com.au

www.primaryhealthtas.com.au

ABN 47 082 572 629

