

National Bowel Cancer Screening Program – Questions and Answers (for GP’s and clinicians)

Q1. Who is being invited:

The Program invites eligible 50-74 years olds. The following table provides further details:

Phase	Start date	End date	Target ages
1	7 August 2006	30 June 2008	55 and 65
2	1 July 2008	30 June 2011	50, 55 and 65
2	1 July 2011	30 June 2013	50, 55 and 65
3	1 July 2013	Ongoing	50, 55, 60 and 65
4	1 January 2015		50, 55, 60, 65, 70 and 74
4	1 January 2016		50, 55, 60, 64, 65, 70, 72 and 74
4	1 January 2017		50, 54, 55, 58, 60, 64, 68, 70, 72 and 74
4	1 January 2018		50, 54, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70, 72 and 74
4	1 January 2019		50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70, 72 and 74

In 2018, two new age cohorts (62 and 66 year olds) will commence receiving the new kit in addition to those already in the Program. In 2019, 52 and 56 year olds will be added. 55 year olds will stop receiving kits in 2018 as the Program will target everyone at a two yearly (rather than a five yearly) interval from 2020.

Q2. Why is a new kit being introduced into the Program?

Answer:

The previous test kit is no longer available to the Program from January 2018 as it will cease to be produced. As such, the new test kit (the Eiken OC-Sensor) and associated pathology service were introduced into the Program following an open Request For Tender process managed by the Australian Government Department of Health.

Q3. Is the new test as good as the previous one?

Answer:

The Program requires a safe and effective kit with a good proven record of performance in detecting the early signs of bowel cancer. The Eiken OC-Sensor, which was introduced into the Program from 2 January 2018, has been extensively evaluated internationally and is a high performing kit. This test kit is in widespread

usage around the world, including in bowel cancer screening programs in other countries, nationally and regionally. The Eiken test kit is already used widely in Australia (albeit not through the Program).

The Eiken OC-Sensor has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for inclusion as an in vitro device on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG).

It is included on the ARTG on the basis of the manufacturer's Instructions For Use for performance claims for sample stability as follows:

- haemoglobin recovery at seven (7) Days = $89 \pm 20.5\%$; and
- haemoglobin recovery at 14 Days = $84 \pm 23.6\%$.

The Program also requires that the associated pathology service is accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA).

Q4. Is the new test kit more user-friendly than the previous one?

Answer:

A user-friendly test kit supports participation and a key focus in introducing the new kit was to enhance its user-friendliness through simplified instructions. A focus on making the external packaging and the kit components as user-friendly as possible has been supported through focus group testing of the kit before its introduction from 2 January 2018.

In addition, during the first 12 months of implementation, continuous improvement of the test kit will remain a key area of focus, guided by evidence available through the Program and feedback from key stakeholders, including states and territories, and cancer councils.

Q5. Has the Program Information Line number changed? Who can I contact if I am a GP/Clinician?

Answer:

No, the Program Information Line number remains the same: **1800 118 868**. The Program Information Line supports provision of Program relevant information, current and future participants with enquiries including about the Program Register, change of address for the Program and requesting a replacement test kit. The Program Information Line does not answer questions about completing the test kit or other specific questions about the test kit, such as the effectiveness of the test or the analysis process of the samples.

There is a new Sonic Test Kit Helpline for participants if they need help with completing the test and other similar inquiries - **1800 930 998** or email NBCSP_Helpline@sonichealthcare.com.au

The Test Kit Helpline is open from 7:30am to 10:00pm on business days and non-national public holidays; and 9:00am to 7:00pm on weekends. The Test Kit Helpline is not available on national public holidays.

GPs and clinicians can call the Sonic Hotline for participants' results or to receive results through electronic means – **1800 957 177** or email NBCSP_Hotline@sonichealthcare.com.au

The operating hours for the Sonic Hotline are [Monday to Friday 9:00am to 6:00pm, Sydney time.](#)

For Dorevitch Pathology (ie enquiries regarding the 'old' kit) contact details are as follows: Ph: **1800 738 365** (Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm, Sydney time).

Q6. Will there be two pathology providers supporting the Program in 2018?

Answer:

Yes there will be two providers supporting the Program during calendar year 2018. This is because Specialist Diagnostic Services (operating as Dorevitch Pathology), will remain in service to support the testing of any returned samples from kits that were sent out in 2017. The new provider, Sonic Healthcare, started supplying the new Eiken OC-Sensor test kit from 2 January 2018 and will also test completed samples returned using the new Eiken test kits.

Q7. How do I know if my patient received/completed a Dorevitch or Sonic kit?

Answer:

The test kits will have either Dorevitch or Sonic branding on the front of the kit box.

All test kits issued from 2 January 2018 are Sonic test kits. This includes replacement test kits, even if the original test kit issued was a Dorevitch kit.

The results notification received by participants and GPs will include Dorevitch or Sonic branding, depending on which kit was used.

If the patient has not yet undertaken the test, or no result has been received, then you may need to contact the Program Information Line on **1800 118 868** to ask which test kit was issued to your patient.

Q8. Why does the new arrangement with Sonic require three laboratories rather than the previous one laboratory arrangement?

Answer:

- The Australian heat and distances pose unique challenges for a Program kit given that the Program uses a mail-out model.
- The new (Eiken OC-Sensor) test kit is included on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods and is already used widely in Australia (albeit not through the Program).

- Multiple laboratories have been chosen to allow for timely return of samples and to minimise the distance travelled by completed samples. All correctly completed samples received will be analysed on the same day they arrive in the laboratory.
- The arrangement with Sonic includes three laboratories – in Sydney, Brisbane and Perth.
 - The Sydney and Brisbane laboratories went live on 2 January 2018, and the Perth laboratory went live on 5 February 2018.
 - The Sydney laboratory is the main laboratory for the Program; in addition to testing returned samples, it will also manage functions that require centralised management – for example, Program reporting, kit testing helpline and stock management.
 - A fourth laboratory is available as an option and Health and Sonic will continue to monitor to see if this is needed.
- Importantly, the three laboratories will operate virtually as one laboratory because all Sonic laboratories supporting the Program will work under a single interconnected Laboratory Information System and Quality Management System.
- In addition to sample stability reasons, it makes good program management sense to have a viable working alternative to the main Program laboratory, given that the Program continues to grow and will be inviting 4 million people annually from 2020 with at least 2 million expected to return test kits every year.

Q9. Which of the three Sonic labs will returned samples go to?

Answer:

- Completed samples from participants in New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania will go to the Sydney lab located at: 14 Giffnock Avenue, Macquarie Park.
- Queensland and Northern Territory completed samples will go the Brisbane lab located at: 24 Hurworth Street, Bowen Hills.
- Western Australia completed samples will go to the Perth lab located at: 310 Selby Street North, Osborne Park.

Q10. Does my patient need to stop taking their medication/aspirin or change their diet for the purposes of taking the test?

Answer (regardless of which test kit received):

No, your patient does not have to stop taking any of their usual medication before taking this test. Diet will not affect the test due to the type of testing used.

Q11: I am a GP and would like to receive results electronically.

Answer:

Results can be distributed to GPs either electronically (via HL7 or text format) or as a paper copy.

GPs will receive a HL7 message if they are set up with Sonic to receive results electronically.

Results will be in HL7 PDF format, so the PDF (doctor letter) is embedded in the HL7.

If a GP has a preferred method of receiving results then they can call the Sonic Hotline on **1800 957 177**. Sonic can arrange installation via the local (relevant) laboratory team.

The operating hours for the Sonic Hotline are [9:00am to 6:00pm, Sydney time, on weekdays.](#)