

Frequently Asked Questions – For Public Distribution

What is the goal of the CalScope study?

The goal of this study is to learn how many people in California have antibodies to the virus that causes COVID-19 and how this number may change over time. Information collected from this study will help the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and local public health departments understand how many Californians have been infected or received the COVID-19 vaccine and how this information varies across different groups in California (e.g., groups by region, age, race and ethnicity, etc.).

Why does CDPH want to know how many people have antibodies to COVID-19?

This information may help identify groups at high risk for infection and help estimate the future impact of COVID-19 in California. Information and data from this study will only be used by the CalScope study team, and does not contain personal information that can identify you.

Why should I participate?

Your participation helps to ensure a large and diverse group of Californians is included in this study so we can understand the impact of COVID-19 across different communities. Your household was randomly selected from millions of other addresses to represent your county. Your participation will help local health programs get a better idea of how a population’s immunity may differ across groups including children, working adults, and older adults with underlying medical conditions.

Why can’t anyone join this study?

Thousands of households were randomly selected to help ensure information is gathered from a large and diverse group of people—reflecting the diversity of California. This randomized participation will help to understand how population immunity to COVID-19 is changing throughout regions in California and how this impacts different communities.

Is participation in this study confidential?

YES. The survey will not ask for your personal information or citizenship status. All survey and blood test results are collected anonymously (meaning we do not ask for your name) to protect your identity. If you would like study updates, we will ask you to provide your phone number and/or email address, but you don’t have to share this information if you don’t want to. As soon as your participation is completed or if you withdraw from the study, any contact information that you shared with us will be erased.



For more information, email
CalScope@cdph.ca.gov.



What will you do with participant information?

Information collected from this study is stored on a secure server and is password protected. All the researchers who are part of this study must receive training and certifications to make sure they know how to properly handle data and protect the privacy of all participants. Any survey responses or test results will NOT be shared with other groups that are not involved in this study.

Information from this project will be analyzed and reported as a group for overall trends. This means that there is no way someone will be able to find or see your specific survey or test results and be able to identify you. Since all survey responses and test results are collected anonymously (without names), your personal information cannot and will not be shared with any other governmental program.

Who is leading this study?

CalScope is a study run by CDPH, together with Stanford University School of Medicine and seven local county health departments (in Alameda, El Dorado, Kern, Los Angeles, Monterey, San Diego, and Shasta counties).

Do I need to speak English or be a US citizen to join the study?

NO. All study materials and surveys will be available in English, Spanish, Tagalog, and simplified Chinese. Assistance is also available for other languages. Our study does NOT ask about citizenship status.

Do I need a computer with internet access to participate?

NO. You can sign up using your smartphone or mobile phone with a data plan that allows you to access the internet. If you don't have access to the internet, you can register and take the survey by phone at 1-833-580-1333.

Can I join the study if I have been vaccinated?

YES. You can join the study whether or not you have had COVID-19 before or have been vaccinated. It is important to have a diverse group of participants for this study, whether you have been vaccinated or not.

Can I participate again if I have joined the study before?

YES. If you already completed this study in spring or fall of 2021, and your household received another invitation, you can choose to participate again. Up to 1 adult and/or 1 child per household can join the study.

Can more than one adult participate per household?

NO. Only 1 adult (ages 18+) and/or 1 child (ages 1 to 17) can join the study from each household. If there are no children in the household, you are still only allowed to have 1 adult from the household join the study.

Do I have to complete both the survey and the blood sample to be part of the study?

NO. Although we would like to collect both the survey and a blood sample from all participants, we understand that it may not be possible for everyone. You can choose to only complete the survey and not complete the blood/sample test kit.

Will I receive my blood test results?

YES. If you submit a finger-prick blood sample using the at-home test kit, you will receive your results by mail in 6-8 weeks. Your results will tell you if you have SARS-CoV-2 antibodies or not.

Will the antibody test tell me if I am currently infected?

NO. The free antibody test will not be able to tell if you are currently infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 (called SARS-CoV-2).

Will I receive any payment for taking part in the study?

YES. To thank you for your time, you will receive a \$20 gift card for finishing the survey and a \$20 gift card for returning a completed test kit. You can choose to receive an electronic gift card by email or a physical gift card by United States Postal Service (USPS) mail. You can get up to \$40 for one adult and \$40 for one child in your household.