



Considerations for Collecting Race Information

When race data collection is done safely and respectfully, it helps build trust between pregnant individuals and providers. It demonstrates an interest in, and awareness of, pregnant individuals' various aspects of self (e.g. culture, traditions, anxieties, fear) that matter to them. For some, this may not matter, and they may choose not to share their race, but if not asked, there is no space created for the conversation. These conversations can provide insights that can advance the care relationship and personalize the care pregnant individuals receive.

The goal of safe collection of race information is to reduce the possible harm that can arise in the disclosure of this information. Possible harms to the pregnant individual may include actual or perceived bias, discrimination or judgment, privacy concerns, or mistrust in the health-care provider or system.

To increase the safety of race data collection, health-care providers and organizations should consider the following:

- Engage in implicit bias, anti-racism, and trauma-informed care training.
- Provide training and education for individuals involved in data collection.
- Reflect on one's own race and how this may affect patient/client comfort.
- Explain why the health-care provider is asking about the pregnant individual's race.
- Explain how race information will be used.
- Invite pregnant individuals to select their race(s) on the screening requisition. Do not assign their race based on physical characteristics, language, ethnicity, country of origin, etc.
- Protect the privacy of the individual by offering private spaces and confidential conversations whenever feasible.



Want to learn more? Check out these resources:

National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health

- Webinars on racism, anti-racism and racial equality: <https://nccdh.ca/resources/entry/racism-anti-racism-and-racial-equity-webinar-series>
- Introduction to health equity: <https://nccdh.ca/resources/entry/health-equity-online-course>
- Let's Talk: Whiteness and health equity: <https://nccdh.ca/resources/entry/lets-talk-whiteness-and-health-equity>
- Let's Talk: Racism and health equity: <https://nccdh.ca/resources/entry/lets-talk-racism-and-health-equity>

National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health

- Cultural safety collection: https://www.nccih.ca/1673/Cultural_Safety_Collection.nccih?Collectionid=3

Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (SOGC)

- Trauma and Violence Informed Care: <https://sogc.org/en/en/content/events/HUB-Pages/Trauma-and-Trauma-Informed-Practice.aspx>



Sample scripts for collecting race information

When collecting race information from pregnant individuals for MMS, here's an example of what you could say:

This screening uses blood markers and other information to estimate the chance for your baby to have Down syndrome and trisomy 18. Research shows that these blood markers can differ between people of different races. While we still do not understand what causes these different levels, including race helps make the result more accurate.

From this list [show pregnant individual the requisition and reference the race category definitions in table 1], how would you describe your race? You can choose more than one option. If you prefer not to answer, that is okay. This screening can still be done, but the result might be less accurate [meaning that without race, the screen might say you have a higher or lower chance to have a baby with Down syndrome or trisomy 18 than you actually do].

Table 1. Current racial groups that are collected for MMS. *PSO, in collaboration with the MMS laboratories, is exploring the ability to expand the racial categories collected

Racial Category	Description/examples
Black	African, Afro-Caribbean, African-Canadian descent, etc.
Asian	Central Asian (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and other Central Asian descent) East Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and other East Asian descent), South Asian (Afghanistan, East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean, etc.) Southeast Asian (Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian, other Southeast Asian descent)
Indigenous	First Nations, Métis, Inuit descent
White	European descent Middle Eastern (Arab, Persian, West Asian descent, e.g. Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish, and other Middle Eastern descent)
Other	Another race category (write in response)