

Child health study looks at 'checkpoint' between childhood and adolescence

January 5 2016, by Jo Manning

The latest assessments in a major research project on child health in Australia will be taking place on Murdoch's South Street Campus this week.

The Murdoch Childrens Research Institute will be operating its Child Health CheckPoint at the former Murdoch College premises from January 7-23.

They will be re-assessing 11-12 year old children from Western Australia who have been participating in their longitudinal study named [Growing Up in Australia](#) from birth. The activities the children will be taking part in measure heart and [lung function](#), kidney [health](#), [bone health](#), fitness, strength, vision, hearing, diet, physical activity and more. Their parents are also tested.

The aim of the study is to learn more about the health of young Australians as they pass through the 'checkpoint' between childhood and adolescence.

Information from the study will help researchers and policy-makers understand how a child's first decade determines their health as they approach the teenage years.

"We hope the data gathered will help improve prevention and treatment of illnesses and promote good health throughout society," said Dr Susan Clifford, Project Manager of the Child Health CheckPoint.

"Over the last 10 years, the families in Growing Up in Australia have told us so much about themselves and their child – right since he or she was a baby. These early years build the foundations of [good health](#) for life.

"We are lucky in Australia that most children are healthy. Unfortunately, Australian adults still have high rates of heart and lung disease, diabetes, and many other problems.

"By 11-12 years of age, children already show wide variations in their health measurements. Just like height and weight, measures such as blood pressure, lung function and blood cholesterol also vary between children even when they are fit and well.

"These 'normal' differences can predict future adult health. So can children's existing health problems, like asthma, obesity, and poor vision."

When the data is added to Growing Up in Australia, researchers can study how parent and guardian health and early life shape children's current and future health, added Dr Clifford.

The Child Health Checkpoint centre has travelled to different cities in Australia throughout 2015. Around 3500 younger [children](#) participating in Growing Up in Australia have been contacted to take part in the study.

The 3.5 hour assessment will provide families with a snapshot of their child's health and a fun, educational experience for the young participants who get to learn more about their bodies.

Provided by Murdoch University

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