COVID-19 GP Alert

5 January 2022

Keeping yourself safe

COVID-19 self-testing kits for GPs

Please be aware that you may request self-testing kits from your local pathology service provider, this will help with navigating the long COVID-19 testing queues currently being experienced in Queensland.

Booster doses now available from three months

Boosters will be available at three months after the second dose from 31 January 2022 or earlier at some sites as soon as practicable.

In line with advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI), booster doses at four months after the second dose for adults aged 18 and above are now permitted. These doses are available nationally at all vaccine sites.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Protect yourself by ensure you are wearing appropriate PPE.

Refer to the table below for a quick reference on recommended PPE escalation according to risk of unexpected COVID-19 infections in patients and workers.

Table 3. *Healthcare settings*: Recommended PPE escalation according to risk of unexpected COVID-19 infections in patients or workers (in addition to standard precautions +/- transmission-based precautions if indicated for another reason)

	Community level risk → / Client category ↓	Low risk	Moderate Risk As advised by Queensland Health, and Restricted Hospital[4]	High Risk As advised by Queensland Health
STAFF[1]	NO clinical or epidemiological evidence[2] of COVID-19	Standard precautions	Surgical mask[5] Protective eyewear	P2/N95 respirator[7] Protective eyewear
STAFF[1]	Clinical evidence of COVID-19 **WITHOUT** epidemiological evidence[2] of COVID-19	Surgical mask[5] Protective eyewear Gown Gloves	P2/N95 respirator Protective eyewear Gown Gloves	P2/N95 respirator Protective eyewear Gown Gloves
STAFF[1]	**Confirmed COVID-19 OR Suspected COVID-19** (clinical evidence **WITH** epidemiological evidence[2] of COVID-19) **OR** Those with epidemiological evidence[2]	P2/N95 respirator[6] Protective eyewear Gown Gloves	P2/N95 respirator[6] Protective eyewear Gown Gloves	P2/N95 respirator[6] Protective eyewear Gown Gloves
STAFF[1]	**Staff during activities other than direct patient care**	Not Applicable	Surgical mask unless working alone in their own office[3]	Surgical mask unless working alone in their own office[3]
PPE for patient use – with either clinical or epidemiological evidence[2] (excluding children under 12)		Surgical mask where tolerated, unless inpatient in own bed	Surgical mask where tolerated, unless inpatient in own bed	Surgical mask where tolerated, unless inpatient in own bed
PPE for patient use - non-COVID-19 (excluding children under 12)		Nil	Surgical mask where tolerated, unless inpatient in own bed	Surgical mask where tolerated, unless inpatient in own bed
PPE for visitors		Nil	Surgical mask OR Own mask if adequate[3]	Surgical mask OR Own mask if adequate[3]

Read more by downloading the Pandemic Response Guidance and further detailed information regarding PPE can be found here.

E: info@ddwmphn.com.au
P: 07 4615 0900
W: www.ddwmphn.com.au

Head Office
Level 1, 162 Hume Street
(PO Box 81),
Toowoomba QLD 4350

West Moreton
Level 5, World Knowledge Centre,
37 Sinnathamby Boulevard,
Springfield Central QLD 4300

Local Integrated Primary Health Care

ABN 51 605 975 602

Managing COVID-19 positive patients

Providing advice to patients and when to escalate

As Queensland continues to see rapidly rising cases of COVID-19, many GPs will be receiving calls from patients awaiting COVID-19 results (including some who may have risk factors for serious illness). Patients who may be deemed low risk by Queensland Health may also call needing reassurance or advice.

The flowcharts below will help guide triage, review timelines and the provision of advice:

- Flowchart: Pathways to care
- Flowchart: Pathways to care for children and adultescents with COVID-19
- Flowchart: Management of adults with mild COVID-19
- Flowchart: Disease modifying treatments for adults with COVID-19

Further information regarding flowcharts can be found here.

Note to practice managers: We suggest printing the COVID-19 flowcharts for each consulting room and GPs.

For your convenience, we have also created a telephone on hold message, to help triage COVID-19 queries from patients, to allow access for those most in need to access the practice.

Click here to download

Assessing whether to send a patient to ED

Queensland Emergency Departments are experiencing high volumes of patients and should now more than ever be reserved for patients who cannot safely receive assessments or management in any other way. Patients attending ED with non-COVID conditions also have an increased risk of catching COVID while waiting in ED.

Given this context before transferring a patient to ED:

- Ipswich - Call the ED SMO at Ipswich Hospital on (07) 3810-1487
- Darling Downs and West Moreton (rural) - Access your local HealthPathways for ED referrals before transferring a patient to ED.

If the patient has been consulted via telehealth and is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case that requires urgent care, then please call 000 and inform QAS of the patients COVID-19 status.

Queensland Health Updated GP assessment and management of patients with suspected COVID-19 flow chart

The GP assessment and management of patients with suspected COVID-19 flow chart (v2.01) has been updated to incorporate recent changes to:

- CDNA SoNG (v 6.3 24 Dec 2021)
- latest Chief Health Officer Public Health Directions
- Australian Government COVID-19 Test and Isolate National Protocols 1 January 2022
- Australian Government COVID-19 Contacts, Testing and Quarantine 30 December 2021.

Note to practice managers: Please print this for all clinical staff and for all clinical areas, please note moderate level PPE required for all general practices in Queensland.

Updated Public Health Directions

Public Health Directions continue to be updated at a rapid pace. The following is a few important updates to assist when managing your patients.

Isolation

From 8am Monday, 03 January 2022

Updates were made to the Isolation for Diagnosed Cases and Management of Close Contacts Direction (No.2).
The Direction:

- removes the requirement for a diagnosed person to have a COVID-19 test before ending isolation and clarifies that a person with symptoms at day seven (7) should not end isolation
- clarifies that the seven-day isolation period for a diagnosed person commences from the date the COVID-19 test was undertaken
- provides that a diagnosed person should not end isolation while symptomatic, other than for a continuing mild cough.

Confirmed cases of COVID-19:

- must isolate for seven days from the date they took the test that returned a positive result
- can leave isolation on day seven if they have not had symptoms for the last 48 hours (or if the only remaining symptom is a very mild dry cough which is persistent but not getting worse).

Clarification on the following points:

- the quarantine periods for a close contacts within a household can run concurrently with the isolation of the diagnosed person (i.e. the close contact does not need to wait until isolation of the diagnosed person ends to start their quarantine period)
- quarantine of a close contact can be done without other household members quarantining.

Wearing masks

From 1:00am Sunday, 02 January 2022

Updates were made to the Public Health Face Mask Requirements Direction. The Direction will:

- require people in indoor settings to wear a face mask - indoor settings include, but are not limited to workplaces, pubs, clubs and cafes, taxis and rideshare, indoor stadiums and sports arenas, libraries, hairdressers and nail salons, and waiting rooms at medical centres
- provide that it is not necessary to wear a mask in certain situations including a private vehicle when only members of the person's household are present, or when seated at a workplace and where physical distance can be maintained.

PHN living with COVID-19 resources

- COVID-19 in the Community Preparation Checklist
- Managing COVID-19 in the workplace