



Department of
Health

Clinician Alert #15 ALL Clinicians Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Monday 16th March 2020

NEW INFORMATION

Any healthcare worker with direct patient contact, who has a fever (≥ 37.5 or higher) AND an acute respiratory infection must self-isolate and be tested for COVID-19.

All travellers returning to Australia from overseas are required to remain in quarantine for 14 days.

Self-Isolation for returned travellers

Travellers returning from mainland China or Iran in the last 14 days, the Republic of Korea (on or after 5 March 2020), Italy (on or after 11 March 2020), or from any overseas country (on or after 16 March 2020) are required to remain in quarantine at their intended place of residence for a period of 14 days after the date of return to Australia.

Suspect cases for testing

Fever OR acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat) with or without fever, AND

- *proven* international travel (e.g. boarding pass, flight booking) in the 14 days before illness onset, OR
- *proven* close contact in 14 days before illness onset (call local PHU to confirm) with a confirmed case of COVID-19, OR
- hospitalised patients (ICU/HDU) with severe bilateral pneumonia and no travel history OR
- Any healthcare worker* with direct patient contact, who has a fever (≥ 37.5 or higher) AND an acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat).

*includes those workers in aged care and disability support workers, working with vulnerable patients.

Testing

Testing must only be undertaken on people who meet the above testing criteria.

Testing in Metropolitan Perth is ONLY to be done at COVID clinics or on hospital inpatients.

In country areas testing can only be undertaken by hospitals, health centres and remote health clinics operated by the WA Country Health Service, Silver Chain, Aboriginal Medical Services or RFDS.

Patients who are tested for COVID-19 need to remain isolated until results are available. Patients who do not meet the above testing criteria but still meet the [suspect case definition](#) (i.e. unable to prove travel or casual contact only) should self-isolate until symptoms resolve.

DO NOT TEST asymptomatic patients and DO NOT undertake testing for 'clearance' or return to work purposes.

Instructions for testing

- Use a SINGLE dry swab for PCR testing: insert first to obtain oropharyngeal (throat) sample, then insert to obtain nasal sample from each nostril. Use of viral transport medium is preferred.
- If flexible shafted swabs are available, an oropharyngeal sample then nasopharyngeal (both sides) sample is to be done on a single swab. If only rigid-shafted swabs are available, then replace the nasopharyngeal sampling with nasal sampling
- Lower respiratory tract samples for PCR testing can be done if obtainable.

Send samples to your pathology laboratory with an urgent request for 'SARS-CoV-2' with their travel or case contact history or whether they are a healthcare worker.

Reporting

Suspected COVID-19 is urgently notifiable to the Department of Health by completing the notification form either [ONLINE](#) or by printing out the [notification form](#). Notifying by phone is not necessary.

Regional GPs or hospitals that require advice on testing should contact their [local public health unit](#).

Patients with questions regarding COVID-19 can be referred to the [HealthyWA coronavirus website](#).

Dr Clare Huppertz, Senior Medical Advisor

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL DIRECTORATE