

 Tasmanian Government	THIS IS AN ALERT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO ALL DOCTORS IN THIS PRACTICE		
	Communicable Diseases Prevention Unit		
24 April 2020	No. of pages (incl. this page): 1	Phone: 1800 671 738	Fax: 6173 0821

## COVID-19 Update No. 41

This alert updates the 23 April 2020 COVID-19 ALERT.

- Statewide, please refer for testing ALL patients with ANY cold or flu-like symptoms (including mild), eg. fever, rhinorrhea, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath.**
  - For patients who are moderate to very high risk due to potential exposure (see the attached GP Info sheet v14, updated with clinical criteria added back in), refer to THS Respiratory Clinics for testing, for timeliness of results.
  - Symptomatic patients being tested should be treated as suspect cases and instructed to self-isolate until they have their results.
  - Asymptomatic workers in the North-West who have regular interactions with the public, eg healthcare workers, teachers, police officers, are also being encouraged to seek testing. *These people do not need to self-isolate and do not need to be managed as suspect cases.*
  - All hospital staff being released from quarantine in the North West have been instructed they need to be tested and return a negative result before returning to work.
  - There have been further changes in Respiratory Clinic locations – see attached list of THS Respiratory Clinics.
  - Patients tested through the public system will receive a text message from the THS to inform them of negative test results. For patients you refer for testing, please also advise negative results as per standard processes.
  - When providing negative test results to patients, please remind patients of their ongoing need to self-quarantine/isolate if they have been instructed to do so by Public Health Services – irrespective of their negative test result.**
  - Public Health Services will write to people who have been instructed to self-isolate or quarantine, to inform them when it is safe for them to leave their place of isolation.**
  - Please only release from isolation patients who have negative results who have not previously tested positive and who are not in home quarantine. Those in home quarantine include close contacts of confirmed cases, returned travellers and others who have had potential exposure.**
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- The North-West remains a designated localised area with risk of community transmission. Enhanced social distancing restrictions in place in the North West have been extended for a week, ending 11.59 Sunday 3 May.
  - The North West Regional Hospital (NWRH) Emergency Department is open.
  - The North West Private Hospital (NWPH) remains closed.
  - Please continue to instruct all patients tested for COVID-19 to self-isolate at home until results are provided.
  - As at 6:00 pm 23 April 2020, there have been 205 cases confirmed in Tasmania (132 in the North West) and 8 deaths (7 in the North West), with four new cases confirmed in the North West.
  - There are 688 close contacts in isolation being monitored, of which 519 are staff of health/aged care facilities in the NW.
  - Please continue to provide negative test results to patients you test or refer for testing.
  - Confirmed cases are considered infectious for 48 hours before symptom onset and usually for 24 hours after resolution of symptoms.

### What to do:

- Use the **COVID-19 GP Info Sheet V14 (updated with clinical criteria added back in)** when assessing and managing patients with symptoms of COVID-19.

### Further information:

- For Tasmania: [www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au) and [www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/facts/cases-and-testing-updates](http://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/facts/cases-and-testing-updates)
- For referral pathways/forms and general practice preparedness: [Tasmanian HealthPathways](#)

Thank you for your ongoing support, Dr Fay Johnston, Specialist Medical Advisor, Public Health Services.