



Clinician Alert #11 General Practitioners Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

Monday 2 March 2020

NEW INFORMATION

- Test for COVID-19 in patients with a clinically compatible illness who have travelled or transited through a higher (**mainland China, Iran, Italy or South Korea**) or moderate (**Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, Thailand**) risk country in the last 14 days.
- Healthcare workers who have returned from a higher risk country (**mainland China, Iran, Italy or South Korea**) should not work in a hospital or residential care setting for 14 days after leaving the higher risk country.

For an up to date list of countries visit:

<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-covid-19-countries.htm>

Healthcare workers (HCWs) in hospitals and residential care settings

- HCWs who have returned from any higher risk country should be advised not to undertake work in a hospital or residential care setting, including aged care facility, for 14 days after leaving the higher risk country.
- HCWs returning from moderate risk countries should self-monitor for any symptoms for 14 days after leaving the moderate risk countries, and self-isolate if symptomatic.

Suspect case

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

- travel or transit through a **country considered to pose a risk of transmission*** in the 14 days before the onset of illness, OR
- close or casual contact in 14 days before illness onset with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

**Countries considered to pose a risk of transmission:*

- Higher risk: Mainland China, Iran, Italy, South Korea
- Moderate risk: Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, Thailand

<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-covid-19-countries.htm>

Advise patients who do not require inpatient care to **self-isolate** at home while awaiting results of COVID-19 testing.

Testing and infection control:

Patient

- Give the patient a surgical mask to put on and direct to a single room with the door closed.
- Patients with severe symptoms suggestive of pneumonia (breathing difficulty, or frequent, severe or productive cough) should be managed and tested in a hospital in a negative pressure isolation room where possible, phone ahead to the Emergency Department to advise.

Clinician

- Use standard, contact and droplet precautions: a disposable fluid resistant gown, gloves, surgical mask, and eye protection while testing patients with mild symptoms.

Testing

- Dry swabs for PCR testing: a nasopharyngeal swab AND an oropharyngeal (throat) swab
- Serum “to store” for use when serology testing becomes available.
- Send samples to any pathology laboratory with an urgent request for ‘respiratory virus panel and SARS-CoV-2’ with any travel/case contact history. Specimen collection is available at most PathWest collection centres and domiciliary collection may be possible. Call ahead for advice.

Reporting – suspected COVID-19 is urgently notifiable to the Department of Health.

Metro 9222 8588 / 1300 MCDCWA (1300623292)	Kimberley 9194 1630	South West 9781 2350
Goldfields 9080 8200	Midwest 9956 1985	Wheatbelt 9690 1720
Great Southern 9842 7500	Pilbara 9174 1660	After hours/on call 9328 0553

For up to date information refer to the WA Health website (www.health.wa.gov.au/coronavirus)