Clinician alert #26 – All clinicians

Effective from 23rd May 2020

New information

- All people with a fever of $\geq 37.5^\circ C$ without a known source can be considered for testing
- Asymptomatic testing can be undertaken for returned interstate or international travelers in mandatory quarantine
- Infectious disease specialists and clinical microbiologists can approve serology testing

Testing criteria

All people: Consider testing where:

- Fever ($\geq 37.5^\circ C$) OR recent history of fever (e.g. night sweats, chills), without a known source,
- acute respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, sore throat).

This is especially important for:

- anyone who lives or works in a high-risk setting (e.g. healthcare, residential facility)
- contacts of a confirmed case or persons who have returned from outside of WA in the last 14 days
- anyone admitted to hospital

PCR testing remains the preferred test for diagnosing acute COVID-19 infection.

Contact public health on 63732222 to discuss testing in a previously cleared COVID-19 case.

Serology testing

Serology does NOT currently have a role for diagnosis during acute illness but has utility for the diagnosis of past SARS-CoV-2 infection. Serology tests will be arranged by public health where a public health imperative exists or completed upon approval from a clinical microbiologist or infectious disease specialist.

Isolation following testing

All people tested for suspected COVID-19 must be advised to self-isolate until they have received their test result. Carers of a dependent who has been tested are not required to self-isolate whilst awaiting the result on the dependent person.

Refer to ‘Testing for SARS-CoV-2 in Western Australia #5’ for further information.

Testing of returned travellers in quarantine

WA Health has approved testing of asymptomatic returned travellers in quarantine as specified in the Approval to request COVID-19 testing people isolated or quarantined. Specimens should be collected as close to the end of the quarantine period as possible, allowing enough time for results to be received. If a negative test result is received, the returned traveller may finish quarantine after 14-days. If a positive result is received, the returned traveller must self-isolate and will be contacted by public health with further advice.
Testing of asymptomatic patients

Testing asymptomatic patients is permitted in a number of settings with approval for these scenarios found at https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/covid-19-testing-directions

Asymptomatic testing should not be undertaken for return to work purposes or fit for work purposes unless approved by public health.

Contact public health on 6373 2222 to discuss any testing in a previously cleared COVID-19 case.

Clearance of cases from infection

Refer to the Medical Clearance of a Case factsheet for information about case clearance.

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