Clinician alert #28 – All clinicians
Effective from 21st June 2020

New information

- People with acute loss of smell or loss of taste may be tested in certain circumstances.
- Cases returning to a high-risk setting can be released from isolation based on clinical criteria. Clearance swabs are not required.

Testing criteria

Consider testing with PCR for people with:
- Fever (≥37.5°C) OR recent history of fever (e.g. night sweats, chills), without a known source,
- OR
- 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 people returning from outside WA in the last 14 days
- anyone admitted to hospital

Consider testing people with acute loss of smell or taste if they also meet one or more of the following criteria:
- Close contact of a confirmed or probable case
- Healthcare, aged, or residential care workers with direct patient contact
- Persons who have returned from outside WA or have lived/travelled through an area with elevated risk of community transmission
- Hospitalised patients where there is no alternative cause

PCR is the test of choice for any person with acute symptoms of COVID-19.

Serology has utility for the diagnosis of past COVID-19 infection.

Discuss PCR testing in previously cleared COVID-19 cases with public health (1300 316 555).

Refer to ‘Testing for SARS-CoV-2 in Western Australia #7’ for further information regarding:
- Serology testing criteria
- Isolation following testing
- Requesting testing for visa requirements
- Restrictions related to testing of asymptomatic patients

Release from isolation of cases

Refer to the Release from isolation of a case factsheet for information about case clearance.

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COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL DIRECTORATE

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