Clinician alert #29 – All clinicians

Effective from 14th July 2020

New information

- Clinicians can request asymptomatic COVID-19 testing for patients who are required to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test to meet the entry requirements of overseas governments (conditions apply)
- All people entering WA who have been in Victoria within 14 days of arrival require testing on day 11 at either COVID clinics or WA government health facilities. Testing for this purpose is not available at private pathology collection centres or GP respiratory centres. All people arriving on flights from Melbourne also require testing on arrival.
- Asymptomatic testing prior to an aerodigestive procedure should not be performed
- Clinical and public health judgement should be used to assess whether hospitalised patients with non-specific signs of infection should be considered suspect cases

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 people with one of the following epidemiological criteria:

- anyone who lives or works in a high-risk setting with direct patient contact (e.g. healthcare, aged care or residential care)
- contacts of a confirmed or probable case
- people returning from outside WA in the last 14 days or have lived/ travelled through an area with elevated risk of community transmission
- where clinical and public health have determined a hospitalised patient with non-specific signs of infection are at increased risk of COVID

Consider testing people with acute loss of smell or taste if they meet one of the epidemiological criteria above.

PCR is the test of choice for any person with acute symptoms of COVID-19. Discuss PCR testing in previously cleared COVID-19 cases with public health (1300 316 555).

Testing for visa purposes

The Chief Health Officer (CHO) has approved testing for asymptomatic individuals for visa requirements. See here for the CHO approval to request COVID-19 testing on patients who are required to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test to meet the entry requirements of overseas governments.

Prior to requesting the test, the requesting clinician must:

- Visualise written evidence of the requirement for a negative result as a condition of entry by the patient to that country
- The evidence must consist of an official statement from the government of that country confirming that the patient requires a negative COVID test

On requesting the test, the requesting clinician must document the reason for the test as:
• “Entry requirement by overseas country for immigration or travel.”

**Testing of those entering WA who have been in Victoria within 14 days of arrival**

- All people arriving at Perth airport from Melbourne must be tested for COVID on arrival
- All people entering WA who have been in Victoria within 14 days of arrival must be tested for COVID on day 11 as per the [Presentation for testing directions (No2)](.)
- The CHO has provided approval for [Testing on persons who have been to Victoria who are required to be Tested](.)
- Testing under this circumstance can **only** occur at COVID clinics or WA government health facilities and **cannot** be carried out at private collection centres or GP respiratory clinics
- Specimen collectors can request the test
- If a patient presents to a GP for this testing, they should be referred to their nearest COVID clinic or WA government health facility, not a private pathology collection centre or GP respiratory clinic
- The request form should clearly state:
  - The person has travelled from Victoria in the last 14 days
  - The day of their quarantine, e.g. Day 11
  - What (if any) symptoms, they are experiencing
- Patients must complete their 14 days quarantine even if they receive a negative result
- Patients who have been granted an exemption from quarantine and are not symptomatic do not need to self-isolate until they receive a negative result

**Asymptomatic testing prior to aerodigestive procedures**

Asymptomatic testing ahead of aerodigestive procedures is no longer approved

**Further information**

Refer to ‘[Testing for SARS-CoV-2 in Western Australia #9](.)’ 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 factsheet](.) for information about case clearance.

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COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL DIRECTORATE

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