



28 April 2022

## Easing public health social measures

As announced by the Health Minister this week, [public health social measures will be eased](#) from 12.01am tomorrow, Friday 29 April.

Key changes that affect WA health sites are summarised below.

### Visitors

[Visitor guidelines](#) have been updated. Visitors to hospitals will still be required to register and wear masks at all times while on hospital premises.

All patients will be permitted up to 2 standard visitors or an essential visitor and one other standard visitor during standard visiting hours. No patient should have more than a total of 2 visitors within the hospital at any time.

Visitor testing will continue as per current testing regimes in the SAR. Recovered cases do not need to be tested within 12 weeks after release from isolation (unless new symptoms appear). Only those visitors who don't pass the screening questions (be that because they are unvaccinated, have a mask exemption or are refusing a RAT) are screened for previous infection. A date stamped photograph of a positive RAT or SMS with proof of positive PCR can be presented as evidence of previous infection.

### System Alert and Response (SAR)

The [SAR](#) has been updated to reflect the updated visitor policy. Changes related to patient testing and screening, including guidance for inpatient surveillance are included. The dental guidance has also been updated to allow routine dental care to be carried out in red.

The SAR level (Red) has not changed.

### Staff who are close contacts

The existing [staff furlough policy](#) related to close contacts with low or high impact on services should continue to be used. Staff who are close contacts should only be called back to work under the existing circumstances described in this policy.

### Physical distancing

The 2 square metre rule has been removed but the requirement to physically distance remains in accordance with good public health hygiene and, as such, a

practical and COVID-safe approach is advised. Health services should use their discretion about appropriate capacity limits for shared spaces such as meeting rooms, patient rooms or lecture theatres.

### **Masks in healthcare settings**

Masks remain mandatory in high risk settings for people aged 12 years and over, including healthcare settings.

Healthcare setting means a public or private health facility where health care is primarily delivered via face-to-face services provided to residents, patients, clients and others.

This will include mainstream primary health care (so not iridology, massage therapy etc), but exclude telehealth services, pathology laboratories and corporate areas.

The changes described above represent the minimum public health and social measures required. Individual hospital and healthcare sites are free to impose additional restrictions as appropriate to their settings.

## **Staff influenza vaccine update**

Staff can now complete the [WA Health staff influenza immunisation program registration form](#) (external site) using VaccinateWA.

The [WA Health Staff Member Influenza Vaccination Program Policy](#) requires all staff to complete the influenza form by 30 June each year to either:

- consent or decline to the influenza vaccination
- state that they have already received the influenza vaccination elsewhere in that calendar year.

Staff vaccination clinic dates and locations will be published to the [staff intranet](#) in coming days, which also has further information about the healthcare worker influenza vaccination program.

## **Influenza and COVID-19**

The department has launched its annual consumer influenza [campaign](#).

Updated information about influenza vaccination is on [HealthyWA](#), including that it is safe to receive influenza and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time.

## **Children and COVID-19 vaccines**

A new series of [Roll up for WA “You’ve got questions” videos](#) provide answers to common queries about COVID-19 vaccines for children.

The videos feature Dr Chris Blyth, Paediatric Infectious Diseases Physician at Perth Children’s Hospital, and Professor Desiree Silva from the University of Western Australia and Joondalup Health Campus, who is a professor of paediatrics.

The series includes information about:

- vaccine safety in children
- vaccines for children with chronic medical conditions
- the COVID-19 omicron strain
- needle anxiety in children.

## COVID-19 staff update webinar

The next webinar is scheduled for 1:30 pm Tuesday 3 May 2022 and will feature a COVID-19 update from:

- Dr D J Russell-Weisz, Director General
- Dr Andrew Robertson, Chief Health Officer
- Ms Liz MacLeod, Lead Chief Executive COVID-19 Response.

This webinar will provide an opportunity to reflect on the WA health system's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic and staff are invited to submit questions to the webinar panel using the MS Teams Q and A function.

Visit the [HealthPoint home page](#) to learn topics and to access the MS Teams invitation.

[A recording of the previous webinar is also available](#), which featured Deputy Chief Health Officer Dr Paul Armstrong who discussed the upcoming winter flu season in the COVID-19 context.

**Message Authorised by:** Director, Office of Director General