



COVID-19 (coronavirus) update – 12 March 2020

Dear colleagues

Today we have admitted a number of patients who have confirmed COVID-19. The care these patients are getting in our hospitals is exemplary and I would like to thank all of the staff supporting their care – whether it be ensuring they are fed often and well; their rooms are cleaned or their health needs attended to, you are all contributing to ensuring they make a speedy and safe recovery.

Today I'd like to focus on PPE use for COVID-19, including:

- Preventative measures reminder
- Staff guidance if you are unwell
- PPE use across our service

Preventive measures to keep us healthy

We all have a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19, with simple preventative measures important to reduce transmission. I remind you all to ensure you:

- Wash your hands often and well with soap and water – this should be for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, perform hand hygiene frequently with an alcohol-based hand rub;
- Follow good cough etiquette – use a tissue to cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze, then dispose of the tissue immediately;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- Maintaining social distance of 1.5 metres where possible, avoiding close contact, such as touching; and
- Stay home if you're unwell.

Staff guidance if you are unwell

Staff that are feeling unwell please stay out of the workplace, at home until you are well. If you fall unwell whilst at work, please notify your manager before going home from work. If you have symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (i.e. fever, shortness of breath, cough or sore throat) please arrange prompt assessment, either with your usual GP, or through one of our Hospital Assessment Clinics. If you are tested for COVID-19, you will need to self-isolate until the result of your test is known (normally 24-48 hours). Once your result is known, you can return to work when you are well again (symptom free), or, in the case of confirmed COVID-19 infection, when you are declared recovered.

PPE use across our service

Staff that are working in areas that may come in direct contact with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 will be provided the recommended PPE and training and

support on how to use this PPE. A refresher on proper application and use of PPE is available [here](#).

It is important for us to know when we do need to use PPE, and when it is not clinically necessary. Masks are not recommended for healthy members of the public or for those of us not working directly with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases. Instead, please continue to carefully follow the preventive measures above – these will act as our best defence against illness.

I thank you all for looking after yourselves so we can care for Queenslanders.

Kind regards,

Dr Liz Rushbrook

Metro North Health Incident Controller