



COVID-19 (coronavirus) update – 14 March 2020

Dear colleagues,

We are seeing an incremental number of presentations to our Coronavirus Clinics day on day. It is important that we are responsive to the demand for assessment and information, but clear and consistent in relation to the need for testing.

Important update to COVID-19 testing criteria

Overnight, there was an update to the National guidance¹ – the *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) CDNA National Guidelines for Public Health Units*. Key updates limit testing to close contacts (i.e. not casual contacts) and expands the criteria for testing healthcare workers with direct patient contact. The Metro North COVID-19 testing guidance has been reviewed to reflect these updates and has been published on our intranet site at:

<https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/metronorth/coronavirus>

To be clear, the current criteria for testing are:

- Any person who has travelled overseas within the 14 days before the onset of fever or acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough or sore throat);
- Any person with close contact in 14 days before illness onset with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and who is now exhibiting fever or acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough or sore throat);
- Any person with severe bilateral community-acquired pneumonia requiring HDU/ICU admission, and no other cause identified, with or without recent international travel; or
- Any healthcare worker with direct patient contact that as a fever (37.5 or above) AND an acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough or sore throat).

Patients or healthcare workers who present with cold and flu-like symptoms, who do not meet the above criteria are not required to be tested for COVID-19.

Patients or healthcare workers who are tested are to self-isolate until the test results are known.

I simply cannot overstate the importance of good hygiene and self-care.

- Always wash your hands thoroughly and often
- Cover your cough or sneeze
- if you feel unwell with influenza like illness, please stay out of the workplace and at home until you are well.

- If you fall unwell while at work, please notify your manager before going home from work
- Arrange for testing if you meet the criteria

I am surrounded by every-day *Healthcare Heroes* that I would like to profile in the short term and would love for you to email me over the coming weeks if you have an amazing story to share.

Kind regards,

Dr Liz Rushbrook
Metro North Health Incident Controller

^{1[1]}[https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/7A8654A8CB144F5FCA2584F8001F91E2/\\$File/interim-COVID-19-SoNG-v2.0.pdf](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/7A8654A8CB144F5FCA2584F8001F91E2/$File/interim-COVID-19-SoNG-v2.0.pdf)