



Message from the Metro North Health Incident Controller | COVID-19 update 302 - Sun 26/12/2021 4:44 PM

New Qld cases recorded today: 714

While cases continue to rise in the state, we are seeing an increase in the impact on our hospital system and a steady increase in the number of patients in virtual care.

From today at 3.00 pm, Metro North Health will move to [Tier 3 \(Minus\)](#). With this move there will be some small adjustments based on previous directions which have been outlined, as we don't want to impact any planned care at this stage.

Of important note. There will be no change to visitor access, however visitors to our facilities will not require a temperature check on arrival at this point in time.

Following are reminders of some other important updates.

Point of care rapid antigen tests

A new direction was released which describes the guidelines for '[Point of Care Rapid Antigen Tests for COVID-19 for Queensland Public Hospitals Direction](#).'

Rapid tests have now been supplied to all hospitals. Key things to be aware:

- Rapid antigen tests are an important tool to enable Queensland Public Hospitals to manage the COVID-19 response.
- RT-PCR remains the preferred test for COVID-19 diagnosis but need not be used in the first instance where rapid antigen tests can be used by an authorised tester for screening purposes.

Testing and discharges to RACFs

There have been a number of enquiries around RT-PCR tests and rapid antigen tests in relation to hospital inpatients. RT-PCR tests are recommended for high-risk situations in hospital where the RACF resident will be discharged back to their RACF.

Further detail can be found in the following two documents:

- [Transitions between hospital and residential aged care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic | Guidance Document](#)
- [COVID-19 transitions between hospital and residential aged care facilities discharge letter | Discharge Letter](#).

High-risk PPE status

We have moved to **High Risk PPE** with the key requirements being:

- A P2/N95 mask and protective eyewear is to be worn by all staff in all areas where direct patient care is being provided
- A flat surgical mask is reasonable for staff in non-clinical areas when attending to administrative duties
- A flat surgical mask should be worn by all patients where reasonably tolerated except when in their own bed without visitors or clinician contact

- A flat surgical mask is required for all visitors (except those with an exemption)

Please also note:

- Staff should have a flat surgical mask on arrival to the hospital and progress to their work area and apply an P2/N95 mask before commencing their direct patient care.
- Staff can only remove their mask when sitting alone in their own closed office space or while sitting, socially distanced and having a meal.
- For staff not yet fit tested it is appropriate and reasonable to do a fit check at the time of applying a P2/N95 mask.
- For males a P2/N95 mask requires a clean-shaven face along the mask contact points.

Vaccine clinics: Christmas and New Year period

Some clinics will have changed operating hours over the holidays, so please [check online](#) to find out what clinics are open near you to plan your trip.

COVID procedures and guidelines per facility

We have introduced a very useful [page dedicated to COVID-19 procedures and guidelines](#) for each facility on our extranet. Please familiarise yourself with content on this page.

Staff only COVID swab collection service

A staff only COVID swab collection service has opened at RBWH Education Centre. The COVID swab collection service has been activated so that staff can rapidly access testing. Please ensure you bring along your staff ID card to assist with registration.

Location: RBWH Education Centre, Central Drive

Open: 0900 – 1630, Monday to Saturday

Bring: Your staff ID and Medicare card

Thank you to all Metro North Health staff who have been part of the COVID response this year. Stay safe and keep looking after one another.

Regards,

Louise O’Riordan

Metro North Health Incident Controller

Helpful links

- [Upload evidence of your vaccine](#)
- [Qld Health contact tracing list](#)
- [Register for your vaccine](#)
- [Qld Health general COVID-19 page](#)
- [Metro North COVID-19 extranet](#)
- [COVID vidcast recordings on QHEPS](#)

Metro North Health – overview of cases*

HHS	Patients managed by HHS					Fever clinics			
	Total in-patients			Virtual ward/ HITH/ similar	Deaths**	Total cases (inc. recovered) ***	No. of clinics	Presentations	
	189	ICU patients						Yesterday	Total^
MN total		0	0	170	4	1050	4	1524	272407

*As at 26/12/21

**Metro North Health has four recorded deaths (one person a return traveller into NSW, who passed away in NSW)

*** These numbers reflect the cases being managed by Metro North Health.