



**Message from the Metro North Health Incident Controller | COVID-19 update 307 - Fri 31/12/2021 6:04 PM**

In the past 24 hours, Queensland recorded 3,118 new positive COVID-19 cases which brings Queensland's active number of cases to 11,697.

**Redefinition of confirmed cases and close contacts**

National Cabinet yesterday agreed to significant changes to the definition of a COVID-19 close contact and required isolation periods which were adopted by Queensland from midnight last night. Following further consultation with the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Health Officers today, further changes have been made.

From now, the following will apply:

***Confirmed cases***

- must isolate for seven days from the date they tested positive
- can leave isolation if they have no symptoms on day 7.

***Close contacts***

- Close contacts will be defined, except in exceptional circumstances, as those who usually live with a confirmed case, or who have stayed in the same household for more than 4 hours during their infectious period.
- Close contacts must isolate for seven days from the date of exposure and have a negative RAT on day 6. Symptomatic close contacts must get a PCR test
- Those currently in quarantine as a close contact can leave quarantine if 7 days have past, and they receive a negative test on day 6.

There are requirements for people returning to high-risk facilities.

Please refer to the full direction here: [Isolation for Diagnosed Cases of COVID-19 and Management of Close Contacts Direction](#)

***What this means for us***

These changes will mean significant changes to our health service, enabling a number of impacted staff to return to the workplace earlier than expected. Facilities are currently working through processes to reassess and contact staff who are currently in isolation and determine next steps. We are also working with facilities to support expedited testing for impacted staff to allow their safe return to work.

**Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT)**

I would like to clarify the current information currently circulating in the media and on websites relation to RATs. Please note that given the changes were only introduced last night, our Fever Clinics are currently not able to supply RATs. Work is currently underway around the implementation of RAT to ensure compliance with the Chief Health Officer Direction.

Read the [Chief Health Officer Direction on Rapid Antigen Tests for COVID-19](#)

Regarding testing of patients, it is essential to continue to screen all patients using the screening tool questions, and to conduct a PCR for those with symptoms.

### **Staff testing clinic**

Metro North Health Staff Only COVID Swab Collection Service located at RBWH's Education Centre will be open on Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 January 2022, from 10am – 4pm.

### **Fever Clinic activity**

With the change in definitions to close and casual contacts, we are expecting to see an overall decline in the number of people who present to our Fever Clinics for testing.

With the new definitions, the only people who should present to our Fever Clinics are:

- Individuals who are a close contact (under the new definition)
- Individuals with symptoms of COVID-19.

There are a number of Fever Clinics open over the long weekend. Please refer to the Queensland Health website for information on [Fever Clinic opening hours](#).

### **Working from Home arrangements**

With the current surge in positive COVID cases in the community, staff who are able to effectively perform their roles from home can be supported to do this. We will reassess this next week. Any staff in the workplace must adhere to PPE requirements.

Stay safe and happy new year.

**Louise O’Riordan**

**Metro North Health Incident Controller**

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#### **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](#)