



20 January 2022

Dear colleagues,

- **Hospital visitors**
- **PPE and fit testing**
- **Vaccination boosters**
- **Upcoming vidcasts**

Today there are 16,812 reported new cases of COVID-19 in Queensland.

Hospital visitors

Queensland Health has today released the [*Hospital Entry Direction \(No. 9\)*](#) which introduces additional restrictions for visitors to hospitals. Unless approval has been obtained, all visitors must be vaccinated.

The restrictions include:

Emergency Department

A single visitor is permitted if they are either the parent or guardian of a dependent child or a support person for a patient requiring significant assistance (physical, verbal, cultural support), or on compassionate grounds.

Neonatal Intensive Care

Unrestricted access for a maximum of two parents or carers.

Siblings may be granted access on compassionate grounds.

Paediatric Unit

Unrestricted access for a maximum of two parents or carers.

Pregnancy and Birth

- Antenatal clinics: women are requested to attend appointments on their own. In exceptional circumstances, one support person may be allowed, but permission must be sought by phoning the clinic before arriving for the appointment.
- Birthing suites: only two support people, including the partner, are allowed in the birthing suite.
- Postnatal wards: After birth, no more than two visitors are permitted at any one time. The two visitors may be an adult and a child of any age.

Operating Theatre and Recovery Room

Visitors not routinely allowed, however parents may visit children post-surgery.

Acute Medical Unit or Intensive Care Unit

Two support people permitted.

COVID designated zones, beds or wards

No visitors except where the patient is a child, has a cognitive impairment or has a need for a full time support person (due for example to frailty, self-care needs or a communication partner is required) provided the visitor is fully vaccinated, and has received a booster dose where eligible. The Operator of the hospital can permit visitors to a COVID designated area for the purpose of an end of life visit in accordance with local protocols.

In all the above circumstances, no person will be denied access to care or treatment based on their vaccination status. Anyone making healthcare decisions for a patient, for example a parent or carer, will also be permitted to accompany the patient regardless of vaccination status.

Visitors (unless they are a patient), staff, students or volunteers should not be anyone who:

- is unwell
- has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or asked to quarantine
- is in home quarantine, unless granted an exemption
- has returned from overseas in the last 14 days (excluding safe travel zone countries), unless granted an exemption
- is a close or secondary contact of a person with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, unless their quarantine period has ended
- is unvaccinated and not visiting for a permitted purpose. Permitted purposes include:
 - under 16 years of age; or
 - unable to receive a COVID-19 vaccination because of a medical contraindication and has evidence of a medical contraindication; or
 - is a COVID-19 vaccine trial participant, and receipt of a Therapeutic Goods Administration approved COVID-19 vaccine would impact the validity of the trial. The medical certificate must not have expired.
 - visiting a patient of the hospital for one of the following purposes:
 - i. end of life visit; or
 - ii. to be a support person during childbirth; or
 - iii. in an emergency.
 - a parent, carer, guardian or other responsible adult who is accompanying a child or minor that is a patient of the hospital; or
 - a carer or support person who provides assistance or other caring responsibilities, including advocacy services, to a patient of the hospital; or
 - is permitted to enter as an unvaccinated worker in healthcare under the [Workers in a Healthcare Setting \(COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements\) Direction](#).
- has had a COVID-19 PCR test and is waiting to receive the results (except for tests due to surveillance testing obligations)
- has [COVID-19 symptoms](#) of fever (37.5 degrees or more), cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of smell or taste, runny nose, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting or fatigue.

You may enter a hospital if you do not fit into any of the above categories. Each hospital and even wards within hospitals can make decisions around visiting that are in the best interest of the patient. These decisions are based on clinical risk and may change depending on the situation at the time. Please respect each hospital's visitor rules including any rules on mask wearing, use of personal protective equipment, screening or testing requirements, hand hygiene or other infection control procedures as required by the Operator of the hospital.

Visitors should:

- wash their hands before entering and leaving the hospital
- stay 1.5 metres away from others where possible
- stay in the patient's room, outside or in a specific area (avoiding communal spaces)
- stay away when unwell
- follow requests from the hospital to help keep staff and patients safe.

People visiting a public hospital to access clinical services in an area where there is sustained COVID-19 transmission may be required by the hospital to undertake a rapid antigen test before they can enter.

PPE and fit testing

Metro North will be training new fit testers this weekend and is purchasing more machines and allocating additional staff to improve access across facilities. If you have any concerns about fit testing, please talk to your line manager. Please contact your local EOC if you have any PPE queries.

Vaccination boosters

While the COVID-19 vaccination booster is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged to protect yourself, your loved ones, your colleagues and our patients.

Metro North has vaccination clinics running 7 days, including our Kippa Ring clinic for children aged 5-11. Find your nearest clinic via the [Queensland Health vaccination locations page](#).

If you have had your booster and would like to record it, you can do this via the [COVID-19 Vaccination Hub](#) (available only via a Queensland Health computer or external access to the QH website, using Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox browsers.)

The process is similar to recording your first two doses:

- Download your COVID digital certificate from your myGov account
- Go to the [COVID-19 Vaccination Hub](#)
- Choose the +Booster Vaccination option
- Add your booster details
- Upload or drag and drop your certificate
- Save

For staff who do not usually have Queensland Health computer access, you can complete [the form on the extranet](#), send to your line manager for verification, and then submit to MN-COVID-Staff-Vaccination-Forms-only@health.qld.gov.au for processing.

Upcoming vidcasts

We are planning to hold vidcasts twice a week while we're in Tier 4. The next few scheduled vidcasts are:

- **Tuesday 25/01, 12-1pm** – Acting Chief Executive Jackie Hanson and Incident Controller Louise O'Riordan, COVID update
- **Thursday 27/01, 10-11am** – ED Allied Health Mark Butterworth and staff psychologist Drew Craker, Wellbeing during COVID

The link will be sent prior to each vidcast.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Louise O'Riordan
Metro North Health Incident Controller

Current Metro North Health tier activated – [Tier 4](#)

Helpful links

- [Register your positive RAT result](#)
- [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** | No. of clinics | Presentations |
| | 167 | ICU patients | | | | | Yesterday |
| MN total | | 8 | 6 | 1210 | 8 | 7 | 2128 |
| | | | | | | | |
| Norfolk Island total **** | Total in-patients | | | HITH /Home monitored | Total cases including recovered | Deaths | Close Contacts in quarantine |
| | 0 | ICU Not ventilated | ICU ventilated | | | | |
| | | 0 | 0 | 18 | 70 | 0 | 19 |

As at 20/01/2022

**Metro North Health has eight 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.

**** As part of an Intergovernmental Agreement, from 1 January 2022 Metro North Health is providing a number of health support services to Norfolk Island. This includes advice and support to staff on island in terms of managing COVID patients. The numbers in this section of the table refer to COVID patients who remain on Norfolk Island and are receiving direct care by staff on Norfolk Island.