



6 September 2022

Dear colleagues,

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Current situation

We currently have 67 patients in our care with COVID-19 including, 46 in hospital, 2 ICU with 1 ventilated. There are 21 patients in the Virtual Ward. There are also two people in hospital with influenza.

Today there are 123 staff away from work due to either being positive with COVID or as close contacts.

Tier 1

This morning Metro North moved to [Tier 1](#) of our [COVID and Influenza Response Plan](#).

This includes:

- P2/N95 masks in EDs and COVID units and when caring for close contacts; flat surgical mask in other areas
- Eye protection in line with PPE matrix
- Prioritise new staff fit testing and annual reviews for existing staff
- Review PPE, testing kits, antivirals & vaccine stocks weekly
- Providing outpatient appointments across all urgency categories, prioritising long waits and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients
- Optimise Virtual ED and rapid access clinics
- Provide outpatient appointments across all urgency categories, prioritising long waits and Aboriginal and Torres islander peoples
- Virtual outpatient care to continue to meet Metro North targets
- Optimise and report monthly on Surgery Connect
- Resume meetings – provide a Teams link for times when staff can't attend face-to-face (staff who are COVID positive or close contacts or working from home)
- Prioritise expired mandatory training
- Optimise virtual training where possible

Face masks direction

There is no change to the Chief Health Officer's [Public Health Face Mask Requirements Direction \(No. 5\)](#). Masks are still required indoors for hospitals and healthcare settings,

residential aged care and disability accommodation facilities, corrective services facilities, and on public transport.

From this Friday 9 September there will be a change to the direction to remove the requirement for face masks on domestic flights, but this will not change the requirement for masks in high risk/vulnerable settings which includes healthcare facilities, aged care, disability accommodation, and corrective services facilities.

We will continue to closely monitor the PPE requirements and update you of any changes.

Isolation period

From Friday 9 September, the required isolation period for people with COVID-19 will change from seven to five days for people with no symptoms. This does not apply to people working in aged care, disability care or home care.

All other [isolation requirements](#) will remain the same.

Useful links

- Find a PCR test provider (including drive through, bulk bill, four-plex) on the [Queensland Government website](#). The site also includes locations for RAT kits for eligible commonwealth concession card holders.
- People with respiratory symptoms can make an appointment (often same day) through [GP Respiratory Clinics](#).
- You can find a COVID vaccine provider using the [Department of Health COVID Vaccine Clinic Finder website](#).

Your GP can also provide:

- COVID-19 vaccination
- Referral for COVID-19 and other respiratory virus PCR
- Assessment and management of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses
- Prescription of COVID-19 oral antivirals for eligible COVID-19 positive patients.

Regards,

Louise O’Riordan

Metro North Health Incident Controller