



Clinician alert #29 – All clinicians

Effective from 14th July 2020

New information

- Clinicians can request asymptomatic COVID-19 testing for patients who are required to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test to meet the entry requirements of overseas governments (conditions apply)
- All people entering WA who have been in Victoria within 14 days of arrival require testing on day 11 at either **COVID clinics or WA government health facilities**. Testing for this purpose is **not available** at private pathology collection centres or GP respiratory centres. All people arriving on flights from Melbourne also require testing on arrival.
- Asymptomatic testing prior to an aerodigestive procedure should not be performed
- Clinical and public health judgement should be used to assess whether hospitalised patients with non-specific signs of infection should be considered suspect cases

Testing criteria

Consider testing with PCR for people with:

Fever ($\geq 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$) **OR** recent history of fever (e.g. night sweats, chills), without a known source,
OR

Acute respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, sore throat).

This is especially important for people with one of the following epidemiological criteria:

- anyone who lives or works in a high-risk setting with direct patient contact (e.g. healthcare, aged care or residential care)
- contacts of a confirmed or probable case
- people returning from outside WA in the last 14 days or have lived/ travelled through an area with elevated risk of community transmission
- where clinical and public health have determined a hospitalised patient with non-specific signs of infection are at increased risk of COVID

Consider testing people with **acute loss of smell or taste** if they meet one of the epidemiological criteria above.

PCR is the test of choice for any person with acute symptoms of COVID-19.

Discuss PCR testing in **previously cleared** COVID-19 cases with public health (1300 316 555).

Testing for visa purposes

The Chief Health Officer (CHO) has approved testing for asymptomatic individuals for visa requirements. See [here](#) for the CHO approval to request COVID-19 testing on patients who are required to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test to meet the entry requirements of overseas governments.

Prior to requesting the test, the requesting clinician must:

- Visualise written evidence of the requirement for a negative result as a condition of entry by the patient to that country
- The evidence must consist of an official statement from the government of that country confirming that the patient requires a negative COVID test

On requesting the test, the requesting clinician must document the reason for the test as:

- “Entry requirement by overseas country for immigration or travel.”

Testing of those entering WA who have been in Victoria within 14 days of arrival

- All people arriving at Perth airport from Melbourne must be tested for COVID on arrival
- All people entering WA who have been in Victoria within 14 days of arrival must be tested for COVID on day 11 as per the [Presentation for testing directions \(No2\)](#).
- The CHO has provided approval for [Testing on persons who have been to Victoria who are required to be Tested](#)
- Testing under this circumstance can **only** occur at COVID clinics or WA government health facilities and **cannot** be carried out at private collection centres or GP respiratory clinics
- Specimen collectors can request the test
- If a patient presents to a GP for this testing, they should be referred to their nearest COVID clinic or WA government health facility, not a private pathology collection centre or GP respiratory clinic
- The request form should clearly state:
 - The person has travelled from Victoria in the last 14 days
 - The day of their quarantine, e.g. Day 11
 - What (if any) symptoms, they are experiencing
- Patients must complete their 14 days quarantine even if they receive a negative result
- Patients who have been granted an exemption from quarantine and are not symptomatic do not need to self-isolate until they receive a negative result

Asymptomatic testing prior to aerodigestive procedures

Asymptomatic testing ahead of aerodigestive procedures is no longer approved

Further information

Refer to '[Testing for SARS-CoV-2 in Western Australia #9](#)' for further information regarding:

- Serology testing criteria
- Isolation following testing
- Requesting testing for visa requirements
- Restrictions related to testing of asymptomatic patients

Release from isolation of cases

Refer to the [Release from isolation factsheet](#) for information about case clearance.

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COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL DIRECTORATE

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