



Excellence in
Rural Healthcare

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Covid 19 – Further developments in the testing environment specifically focussed on Public Residential Aged Care Services (PSRACS)

Thursday, 30 April 2020

Good afternoon,

I trust you and your loved ones are well in these challenging times.

I write on behalf of the Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews and our Health Minister Jenny Mikakos to advise around further activity that we as a public health service and provider of residential aged care services have been directed to undertake in the coming 11 days, as part of the current blitz in enhanced testing for the Covid-19 pandemic.

You may be aware that we have moved in the state of Victoria to a position of testing even asymptomatic citizens, with an enhanced focus on health care workers. As part of this, we have today received direction that also involves testing requirements for those residing in a public residential aged care service here in Victoria, as a residential aged care facility is considered a sensitive setting in relation to Victoria's coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic response.

Older Victorians, many of whom may also have co-existing illnesses, are at increased risk of serious complications if they contract coronavirus (COVID-19). Infection can spread rapidly through residential and aged care facilities, and we have unfortunately seen the consequences of this across the world in our older populations.

For this reason, the Department of Health and Human Services (the department) is requesting all staff and residents of PSRACS to be tested as soon as possible within the next 11 days as part of a major testing blitz across the state.

Public health services that auspice PSRACS have been asked to arrange COVID-19 tests for all staff and residents. To be clear, symptoms do not need to be present now for this testing to occur.

All positive COVID-19 cases are then required to be reported to the department. In the event of a confirmed case, a Public Health Officer will make contact with the PSRACS to provide advice and support for enacting their COVID-19 management plan to contain any outbreak and commence contact tracing.

The testing will be undertaken here at CDH. There is no requirement for residents to move or go to a testing station, we will arrange during the course of next week for testing to be undertaken safely here in the comforts of the facility. There is also no cost to the resident as part of this process, and the test itself is a simple nasal swab that may be slightly uncomfortable during its collection, but will leave no further injury or concern to the person undergoing it.

As part of this, we are undertaking an informed consent processes for all residents and staff before undertaking testing.

For residents unable to consent, their medical treatment decision maker must be contacted to provide consent, therefore we are asking that if you have received this letter in the mail or know that as your loved ones next of kin or power of attorney you usually sign for them, we are asking for your assistance in completing the attached consent form. A return envelope has been provided for this to be sent back to the service, and we ask for your help in getting this back asap in time for testing to be arranged facility wide next week.

We understand this is a new development, something that is being asked of all Victorians at this time, as we look to further understand this pandemic and limit its impact. I have included the attached asymptomatic information sheet as a reference resource and we are also happy to discuss this further with you here at CDH if you have any concerns.

As part of the next phase, we will of course be communicating further as to the outcomes of the testing, to which we are hoping to receive a resounding 100% clearance. To do that though, we need your support and permission at this time, and appreciate your help in continuing to support us as we minimise the impact of this pandemic for our residents, staff and community.

Regards,



Ben Maw

Chief Executive Officer

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We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional Aboriginal custodians of this land and to the Elders past and present.



Coronavirus (COVID-19) – getting tested when you do not have symptoms (asymptomatic testing)

Information for staff at testing clinics – answers to patient questions

You have volunteered to be tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) without having symptoms. You do not need to self-isolate while you wait for your results and can go to work or go about your usual activities. Please read this information carefully.

Why am I being tested even though I don't have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)?

The Department of Health and Human Services is rolling out an enhanced testing program to better understand how the virus is spreading in the community. The more tests that are done, the more data the department has about the prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) in our community which will help inform the potential easing of restrictions.

There is a small chance that you have coronavirus (COVID-19) even though you feel well and don't have any symptoms. This is known as an asymptomatic case of coronavirus (COVID-19).

It is possible that people without symptoms (asymptomatic cases) pass on coronavirus (COVID-19) to other people without knowing it.

Who is being asked to volunteer to be tested?

Currently, asymptomatic testing is limited in the community. You are being asked to volunteer as part of an approved program of asymptomatic testing.

What do I need to do?

You will be asked to provide some contact details and answer some brief questions, including checking whether you may have any minor symptoms. This is so we can contact you in the event of a positive result (see below) and so we understand how the virus is showing itself in the community.

What should I do while I am waiting for the test results?

It may take a few days for your test results to come back. You do not need to self-isolate while you wait for your results if you are feeling well.

Who will provide my results?

The health service or doctor that has arranged your test is responsible for providing you with your results.

What happens if my test is negative?

If your test is negative, you can continue to work and go about your usual activities, whilst continuing to follow the current directions that are in place.

However, if you develop symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), you must self-isolate and not go to work. You will also need to be tested again.

What happens if my test is positive?

A Public Health Officer will contact you to find out more information from you and provide you with further advice about what you need to do. If necessary, a specialist may be involved to further assess your situation to ensure you are getting the support you need.

It is important that you stay in your home or accommodation until a Public Health Officer advises that you are no longer infectious, and it is safe for you to return to normal activities.

You will also need to follow any directions issued under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* that relate to your diagnosis.

People who you have had close contact with, including family members and people you live with, will need to self-isolate for 14 days since their last contact with you.

If your condition deteriorates, seek medical attention, taking the following steps:

- Notify the department or Public Health Officer managing your care by calling the number provided to you.
- Follow the direction of the Public Health Officer who may advise you to go to a doctor or a hospital and will agree with you how you should get there.
- Call ahead to the doctor or hospital and inform them that you have coronavirus (COVID-19).
- If you need to leave your home or accommodation to seek medical attention, put on a mask if you have one.
- When you arrive at the doctor's surgery or hospital, tell them that you have coronavirus (COVID-19).

If you are experiencing severe symptoms, such as shortness of breath:

- Call 000 and request an ambulance.
- Inform the ambulance officers that you have coronavirus (COVID-19).

What happens if my result is borderline positive?

There is a very small chance that your test result will not be clearly positive or negative. These results are considered "indeterminate" or borderline positive. If your test is borderline positive, you will need to follow the same instructions for positive cases (as above) until we can determine whether your test is truly negative or positive.

What will happen to my health information and test results?

The information you provide, and your test result will be stored securely by the department. The information will be used and disclosed for public health management and research purposes, to manage positive or borderline positive results and any associated enforcement action that may be necessary, where this is reasonably necessary to prevent a threat to public health and safety and to inform the response to coronavirus (COVID-19) in Victoria.

Where can I find out more information?

Call the coronavirus (COVID-19) hotline on **1800 675 398** to discuss any questions you have. If you need a translator first call 131 450, then request the hotline on **1800 675 398**.

For Victorian updates about COVID-19, go to: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

For national updates: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 651 160, using the National Relay Service 131 450 if required, or email [Public Health branch](mailto:public.health@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <public.health@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

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AFFIX LABEL HERE if applicable

U.R. NUMBER: _____
 SURNAME: _____
 GIVEN NAME: _____
 DATE OF BIRTH: ____/____/____ SEX: _____

**CONSENT TO BE
 SWABBED FOR COVID-19**

Patient Details

The Doctors and Staff at this clinic are committed to whole patient care. This includes preventive care as well as ongoing care. To enable us to carry this out, please complete the following form. This information will be treated confidentially.

Thank you for your assistance.

Cohuna District Hospital Employee/Volunteer (file in HR Department)

Designation: Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss Other

First Name: _____

Surname: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Gender: Male Female Other

Address: _____
 _____ Postcode: _____

Home Phone: _____

Mobile Phone: _____

Medicare Number: _____

Ref No (on card): _____ Expiry Date: _____

Concession Card: Health Care Card Pension DVA

Card Number: _____ Expiry: _____

Residential Aged Care Consumer (file in Aged Care Record)

Consumer name: _____

Consumer Signature _____ Date: _____

OR IF UNABLE TO SIGN please fill in below

Authorised person on behalf of Consumer:

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Relationship to Consumer: _____

