



Clinician Alert #13 General Practitioners

COVID-19 (Coronavirus disease)

NEW INFORMATION

IMPORTANT CHANGE TO THE SUSPECT CASE DEFINITION

Test for COVID-19 in patients with a **clinically compatible illness who have travelled overseas in the last 14 days**

Self-Isolation for return travellers

- Incoming travellers who have returned from mainland China or Iran (any date), the Republic of Korea (on or after 5 March 2020) or Italy (on or after 11 March 2020) will be required to self-isolate at their intended place of residence for a period of 14 days from the date of departure.

Suspect case

- Fever OR acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough or sore throat) with or without fever, AND
 - international travel in the 14 days before the onset of illness, OR
 - close or casual contact in 14 days before illness onset with a confirmed case of COVID-19, OR
- Bilateral severe community acquired pneumonia (critically ill) and no other cause is identified, with or without recent international travel, OR
- Moderate or severe community acquired pneumonia (hospitalised) in a healthcare worker, with or without international travel.

Patients suspected to have COVID-19 should be tested and isolated until results are available.

Testing and infection control:

Patient

- Give the patient a surgical mask to put on and direct to a single room with the door closed.
- Patients with severe symptoms suggestive of pneumonia (breathing difficulty, or frequent, severe or productive cough) should be managed and tested in a hospital in a negative pressure isolation room where possible, phone ahead to the Emergency Department to advise.

Clinician

- Use standard, contact and droplet precautions: a disposable fluid resistant gown, gloves, surgical mask, and eye protection while testing patients with mild symptoms.

Testing

- Dry swabs for PCR testing: a nasopharyngeal swab AND an oropharyngeal (throat) swab
- Serum “to store” for use when serology testing becomes available.
- Send samples to any pathology laboratory with an urgent request for ‘SARS-CoV-2’ **with any travel/case contact history and whether they are a healthcare worker**. Specimen collection is available at COVID Clinics (metro), some PathWest collection centres and domiciliary collection may be possible. Call ahead for advice.

Reporting

Suspected COVID-19 is urgently notifiable to the Department of Health by completing the notification form either [ONLINE](#) or by printing out the [notification form](#).

Call your local PHU to discuss urgent testing or if after consulting the [COVID-19 Series of National Guidelines](#), you have any public health queries regarding COVID-19:

Metro 9222 8588 / 1300 MCDWA (1300623292)	Kimberley 9194 1630	South West 9781 2359
Goldfields 9080 8200	Midwest 9956 1985	Wheatbelt 9690 1720
Great Southern 9842 7500	Pilbara 9174 1660	After hours/on call 9328 0553

For up to date information refer to the WA Health website (www.health.wa.gov.au/coronavirus)

Dr Paul Armstrong, Director

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL DIRECTORATE