



THIS IS AN ALERT FROM THE
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Please distribute as soon as possible to all doctors and nurses in this practice.

Public Health Emergency Operations Centre

13 October 2022

No. of pages
(including this page): 3

Phone: 1800 671 738

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COVID-19 Update No. 134

This alert updates the **23 September 2022** (*No. 133*) COVID-19 Update.

Changes to isolation requirements

From 14 October 2022 individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will no longer be mandated to isolate, but it will continue to be **recommended** that anyone with respiratory symptoms stay at home and take steps to protect others.

The removal of the requirement to isolate under Public Health measures has been made in recognition of the current lower rates of COVID-19 transmission, high vaccination rates across Tasmania and the country and improved access to treatments that help protect those at risk of severe disease.

Other considerations were the continued lower rates of cases, hospitalisations, intensive care admissions and outbreaks in Residential Aged Care Facilities across Australia.

It also realigns the management of COVID-19 with other respiratory illnesses, such as Influenza and RSV through the promotion of individual responsibility, resilience and self-reliance and builds on the lessons learnt from COVID-19.

Recognition of ongoing risk in Tasmania

It is important to note this change **does not** indicate that the pandemic is over. Although case numbers and transmission rates are currently low in Tasmania, COVID-19 has not gone away.

The current risk level in Tasmania is **LOW-MODERATE**.

The virus is still circulating in the community and presents a risk, particularly to older Tasmanians and people with significant illnesses.

Key implications of change

The mandated requirement to isolate for five days will end from 12:01 AM on Friday 14 October 2022 **BUT** the need to stay at home will continue to remain consistent with the management of other communicable diseases.

From this date **anyone who tests positive to COVID-19 or has symptoms** consistent with COVID-19 or other respiratory illnesses (fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose) should:

- stay home until these acute symptoms have resolved

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- take steps in the following days to minimise any residual risk to others
- avoid contact with individuals and settings at risk to the consequences of COVID-19
- **NOT** visit people at high risk of severe illness, anyone in hospital, or an aged or disability care facility for at least seven days (even for the purposes of work)

Continued importance of testing

To ensure the ongoing successful management of the COVID-19 response, to protect our healthcare system and those that are vulnerable to severe disease, it is important Tasmanians continue to test for COVID-19 if they are symptomatic.

Anyone who has symptoms should continue to test – **even if symptoms are mild**. This is especially important for those:

- at risk of severe disease and eligible for antiviral treatment
- in residential aged care and disability settings (symptomatic staff and residents)
- providing close personal in home care aged and disability services
- in hospital settings (symptomatic staff and patients)

If a symptomatic individual returns a negative result for COVID-19 on a RAT, they should take a second RAT or have a PCR the following day.

Regardless of the result individuals should remain at home until the symptoms have mostly resolved as it is likely they may have another infectious illness.

Anyone who must leave home for any reason while symptoms remain **should**:

- wear a mask when indoors and on public transport
- return to the home as soon as possible
- avoid large gatherings and indoor crowded places for at least seven days
- **NOT** visit people at high risk of severe illness, anyone in hospital, or an aged or disability care facility for at least seven days (even for the purposes of work)

Workplace management

Workplace policy will continue to be used to regulate workplace attendance in accordance with procedures identified within individual businesses' risk assessments. This may include work from home recommendations or restrictions on returning to work if identified as a COVID-19 case or contact along with additional protective measures, including mask wearing in certain situations and when risk is high in the community.

Ongoing Public Health advice

As we learn to live safely with COVID-19, it is important Tasmanians continue to practice the established hygiene behaviours that help to minimise the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses and passing it on to others who are at risk from severe illness.

Key messages

- Stay at home while you have symptoms
- Test if symptomatic (especially if at risk of severe illness or eligible for antiviral treatments)
- Maintain good hygiene (keeping hands clean, covering coughs and sneezes and physical distancing)

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- Stay up to date with vaccination (this offers **the best protection** against severe disease)

Public Health will continue to monitor the level of COVID-19 in the community and continue to update Tasmanians about COVID-19 risk levels.

For more information visit: [Managing the current COVID-19 risk | Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#).

What to do

- Ensure your Work Health and Safety Risk Assessment is up to date, and you have policies in place to manage symptomatic staff and staff who become COVID-19 cases or close contacts.
- Ensure your clinic is set up to continue to reduce risks of transmission by using physical distancing, personal protective equipment, ventilation, hand hygiene and other measures.
- Review and prepare management plans for all patients at risk of severe illness to ensure rapid access to testing and anti-viral treatments.
- Encourage all eligible patients to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and make sure booster doses are up to date. For vaccine information go to www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/vaccine
- Continue to support all staff and patients to get tested for COVID-19 if they have any cold or flu-like symptoms or loss of smell or taste with a PCR or RAT.
- Ensure employees with symptoms or test positive **DO NOT** attend listed high-risk premises for at least seven days
- Continue to encourage staff and patients to follow establish hygienic behaviours and be aware of the current COVID-19 risk. More information is at www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/covidrisk
- Keep your COVID-19 Safety Plan up to date and ensure all staff are aware of the actions they need to take. More information is at www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/safety-plans
- Continue to screen patients for respiratory symptoms and to consider their workplace framework for managing symptomatic patients and those at risk of COVID-19 such as close contacts.
- If you have any questions about this alert, please contact the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre at covid.response@health.tas.gov.au or call the Public Health Hotline on **1800 671 738**.

Thank you for your contributions and support for the Tasmanian COVID-19 response.

Dr Julie Graham

Deputy Director Public Health

Public Health Emergency Operations Centre

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