

 Tasmanian Government	<p style="text-align: center;">THIS IS AN ALERT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH</p> <p>Please distribute as soon as possible to all doctors and nurses in this practice.</p>		
	Public Health Emergency Operations Centre		
1 July 2022	No. of pages (including this page): 3	Phone: 1800 671 738	Fax: 6173 0821

COVID-19 Update No. 126

This alert updates the **27 May 2022** (No. 125) COVID-19 Update.

Management of COVID-19 under the *Public Health Act 1997*

From 1 July 2022, the Public Health Emergency Declaration in response to COVID-19 in Tasmania is no longer in place.

This does not mean the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

We will continue to manage COVID-19 using established powers for managing communicable diseases under the *Public Health Act 1997*.

What has NOT changed

- COVID-19 cases, contacts and outbreaks are still being managed under the *Public Health Act 1997*.
- Cases are still required to isolate for at least 7 days.
- Close contacts are still required to test and wear a mask if they intend to leave home and notify their employer that they are a close contact.
- Anyone with new respiratory symptoms, even mild, **should stay at home, get tested and report a positive RAT.**
- Workplaces still need to consider the risk posed by COVID-19 and other common respiratory infections and use practicable and proportionate measures to reduce such risks.
- COVID safe behaviour must still be maintained and promoted.

What has changed

- The Public Health Emergency Declaration is no longer in place.
- Masks are no longer mandated by Public Health Directions in most settings. Masks are still recommended where it is difficult to physically distance and/or where there are persons at risk of severe illness. Everyone should be supported to wear a mask when and where they choose to. Workplaces may recommend or require masks following their workplace health and safety risk assessment.
- Public Health continues to recommend that everyone gets the doses of COVID-19 vaccine that they are eligible for. Public Health no longer mandates vaccination for certain workers, but

This document and any following pages are intended solely for the named addresses and may contain information that is confidential and privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, note that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately by telephone and destroy the original message.

individual workplaces may recommend or require vaccination as part of their workplace health and safety measures.

- Because of these changes, individuals and businesses need to actively assess their own risk and put in place mitigations.

Responsibilities under *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*

All employers have duties under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* to provide a safe working environment for workers, contractors and visitors to the workplace. A safe working environment means all hazards are identified and controlled so far as is reasonably practicable.

All employers in Tasmania are also required to provide workers with safe systems of work, which includes processes that reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Completing a risk assessment will help employers identify and assess COVID-19 risks and determine what controls will be effective to reduce these risks. Employers should apply controls that are proportionate and appropriate for the level of risk based on the requirements of each individual site.

This may include requiring staff, patients and visitors to wear masks and for requirements to remain up to date with vaccination remain as a condition of employment.

For more information about health and safety requirements relating to COVID-19 and risk assessments can be found on the [WorkSafe website](#).

Public Health information resources

Staff, patients, and visitors in health care settings may encounter COVID-19 in the community, and these settings. Many people in health and aged care settings are at higher risk of severe COVID-19 illness.

Public Health reminds health care providers of their obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* to undertake a risk assessment and develop and maintain policies and procedures to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses in their setting.

To assist with this process Public Health has developed a series of information resources to provide best practice guidance on controls for COVID-19, influenza and other acute respiratory illnesses.

The series of documents provides information specific to health settings as well as general advice and guidance on:

- assessing and managing risk
- understanding ongoing COVID-19 requirements
- vaccination
- managing symptoms and close contacts
- facemasks
- ventilation
- managing people with symptoms

This document and any following pages are intended solely for the named addresses and may contain information that is confidential and privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, note that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately by telephone and destroy the original message.

- best practice risk control measures
- physical distancing, hand hygiene and cleaning
- employees at higher risk of severe illness
- best practice risk control measures for management of patients.

These resources are available [here](#).

WHAT TO DO

- Update your workplace health and safety risk assessment to consider COVID-19 risk and mitigations as part of ongoing Health and Safety considerations.
- Ensure your work is set up to reduce risk of transmission events occurring through the use of physical distancing, personal protective equipment, hand hygiene and ventilation
- Continue to screen patients entering your practice for symptoms of COVID-19
- 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 and repeat the test the next day if symptoms persist and the initial test is negative
- Make sure that all patients with a positive RAT result are advised to isolate, to notify their close contacts and to register their result on the coronavirus website at www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/positive-result
- Encourage all eligible patients to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Booster shots are now available three months after completing the primary course. Bookings are required and can be made via www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/booking
- ATAGI recommends a winter dose (second booster) of COVID-19 vaccine, four months after a booster, for medically vulnerable people aged 65 years and over, immunocompromised people and residents of aged or disability care.
- Ensure that all deaths of individuals who have recently had COVID-19 are reported to the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC). If you are unsure if a death should be reported please discuss with the medical team in the PHEOC at pheoc.operations@health.tas.gov.au

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 to the Tasmanian COVID-19 response. We appreciate your support in continuing to manage patients with respiratory illness as we enter the winter months.

Dr Mark Veitch
Director of Public Health

This document and any following pages are intended solely for the named addresses and may contain information that is confidential and privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, note that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately by telephone and destroy the original message.