

## STANDARD COVID PROTOCOLS

### HOW WE MINIMISE THE RISK OF COVID-19 TRANSMISSION AT THIS PRACTICE (updated 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023)

There is an inherent risk in attending a health facility that provides in-person services in a shared office environment. It is not possible for us to eliminate a risk for potential exposure to infective illnesses, including Covid-19.

We are all responsible for taking relevant precautions to minimise exposure to Covid-19, and keep everyone safe. This includes staff, patients, carers and others attending the practice.

Covid-19 can infect vaccinated and unvaccinated persons, and may be asymptomatic. This means that transmission of Covid-19 can occur from and between staff, patients, patient carers and others visiting the practice. Our staff are all vaccinated against Covid-19.

Our practice has legal occupational health and safety obligations to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid-19, so we may have to adopt certain ways of providing care to address this risk.

If our staff become unwell from catching an infectious illness (including Covid-19), this may result in them being unable to work at the practice while they are tested / recover. It may also result in the practice having to close temporarily if key staff are unable to work. It is important to us to minimise this operational risk to our practice, in addition to any other obligations we may have.

### THE WAY WE MANAGE THE RISK OF COVID-19 TRANSMISSION AT THIS PRACTICE INCLUDES:

- we will follow relevant government public health guidelines and requirements. This may include an obligation to notify government bodies / public health authorities regarding persons who have Covid-19 infections. If this is the case, we will only provide the minimum necessary information (e.g. QR code check in data) to the relevant authorities.
- our administration staff may initially talk to you by phone to determine if there are any risks we need to address, before you are able to attend the practice in person. This discussion could include screening questions for patients at high risk of Covid transmission.
- **seating in the waiting area may be limited** and you may be asked to remain in your vehicle or in the main corridor of the DR7 complex until called in for your appointment.
- **we will need to know, prior to appointments or at the time of your appointment being confirmed via SMS or telephone, of any possible upper respiratory symptoms you have experienced; whether you are unwell; have been interstate or overseas in the last 2 weeks; have been in contact with someone who has been**

interstate or overseas in the last 2 weeks; have been to a COVID exposure site; are awaiting a COVID test result; have been in contact with someone known to have COVID; have someone self-isolating at your residence; have been in contact with or have someone at your residence awaiting a COVID test result; whether you are a close contact of someone with Covid-19; whether you have Covid-19; or whether you should be in isolation.

- when the risk of Covid-19 transmission is very high, we may need to delay care; arrange care elsewhere (e.g. hospital; respiratory clinics) or ensure certain steps occur beforehand (e.g. Covid-19 testing such as PCR tests and rapid antigen tests).

- we may need to enquire about your immunity to Covid-19 (vaccination status / past infection) to gauge the risk Covid-19 transmission poses to you. While you don't have to disclose this information, this might interfere with our ability to minimise risk to you, to provide best care, or give you the best advice. In limited situations, it may even mean that we are not able to provide you with care in the manner you are seeking.

- it may be necessary or appropriate for us to conduct a consultation by telehealth (phone or video). Not all telehealth consultations are able to be billed to Medicare, but we will clarify this with you beforehand (and let you know an estimate of any out of pocket costs). Not all consultations can be held by telehealth (e.g. if you need to be examined), and we may need to make other arrangements for your care in such situations.

- all patients may need to sign into our practice using the relevant, CovidSafe app and QR code, when this is required by the authorities.

- all surface areas in the waiting room are cleaned regularly throughout the day with hospital grade disinfectant including door handles, reception counter, clip boards, chair arms etc. The toilet keys, EFTPOS machine and pens are cleaned after each use with 100% alcohol. The consultation rooms are cleaned after each patient with hospital grade disinfectant. The bed covers are changed and disposed of after each patient.

- all patients must use the hand sanitiser provided prior to touching anything or having a seat in the waiting area. Please stand directly behind the sneeze guards when speaking with reception staff.

- patients and those accompanying patients may be asked to wear a mask (even if this is not the current public health mandate). If you are medically exempt from wearing a mask, then you must produce a medical certificate that certifies you have an illness, injury, condition or disability that makes wearing a face covering unsuitable. ([more information on Public Health Measures here](#))

- those at the practice should physically distance wherever possible.

- we ask that all payments be made by card, preferably contactless payment.

- we ask that patients attend their appointment alone if possible (or with only one other person if necessary).

- consultations may be safer to hold outside in some circumstances (e.g. in your car; in a room outside).

- we may arrange consultations at specific times (e.g. first of the day / last of the day) to reduce the risk to others who might be at the practice.
- some consultations may require staff to be in full personal protective equipment.
- as some of these steps may require additional time and resources on behalf of our staff, we reserve the right to not bulk bill these consultations if the cost burden to us is significant. We will inform you of any out of pocket cost that will be incurred, which we will obtain prior to the consultation being held.

Our approach to minimise the transmission of Covid-19 at the practice applies to all patients, and aligns with the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's COVID-19 infection prevention and control risk management, and the Medical Board Code of Conduct.

If this arrangement is not acceptable to you, you will need to find a practice which is able to accommodate your needs.

If you have any queries about how we manage these risks, please do not hesitate to discuss these efforts with your doctor, or the practice staff.

**Abusive language and threatening behaviour will not be tolerated.**

We thank you for your cooperation.

#### **ADDITIONAL COVID-19 INFORMATION**

- [Locations in Western Australia visited by confirmed COVID-19 cases](#)
- [COVID-19 Symptoms – What to expect](#)
- [COVID-19 Testing Information](#)
- [COVID-19 Testing Clinics](#)
- [WA Dept of Health COVID Care at Home Program](#)
- [Find out about showing proof of your COVID-19 vaccinations](#)
- [Information about the ServiceWA App](#)
- [Information about current restrictions in Western Australia](#)