*COVID Safety Plan*

MEDICINE ON SECOND



Current as of: 13/12/2021

Version: 5

Introduction

This plan provides members of the practice team guidance on operating in a COVID-safe way and helps identify and mitigate risks during the ongoing pandemic.

Purpose and objectives

Our practice is dedicated to the health, safety and wellbeing of all team members, patients, contractors, and visitors. In this pandemic environment, we acknowledge additional precautions are required and that these are outlined in this COVID Safety Plan.

1. Practice access and patient flow

To control the flow of people into and through the practice, we will:

* encourage telehealth consultations (where appropriate)
* Anyone entering the clinic is required to check in on the “Check In Qld” app and show evidence that they have been double vaccinated. If patients are not double vaccinated or cannot prove this then they can be seen in the clinic with a mask on. If they do not wish to wear a mask because of a mask exemption then they will be required to remain outside or in their car when they can be seen by a GP. Alternatively a telehealth consultation can be offered where appropriate. If patient is not double vaccinated and refuses to wear a mask and needs an examination then we will place some screening outside the treatment room.
* For patients who phone for an appointment to see a GP because of covid-19 type symptoms, they will be referred directly to have a Covid-19 test at one of the drive thru clinics where a referral is not required. These clinics change from time to time depending upon demand. Staff will be kept up to date on these as required.
* Any patients that present to the clinic will need to read the A frame sign before entering the clinic. Patients are directed to remain outside and telephone reception if they have any flu like symptoms, cough, cold, sore throat, have come in contact with a known positive Covid Case, have travelled interstate/internationally in the last 14 days, or have been to any known hotspots. The Doctor will consult with them outside or in their car or provide a telehealth consultation.
* limit patient entry to the entrance located at the front door.
* define foot traffic through the practice using floor markings and signage.
* display information at the entrance and ensure clear messaging on the website asking patients to call ahead if they have any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 to enable appropriate triage.
* provide access to hand-hygiene products upon entry and exit (and at appropriate locations throughout the practice), such as an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or hand-washing facilities.
* All patients, staff and anyone else who needs to enter the clinic will be required to sign in with the QR code.

1. Physical distancing

While acknowledging the nature of medical care means maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 m with a patient is not always possible, our practice will put in place physical distancing measure by:

* providing training to all members of the team
* taping a line on the floor 1.5 m from all people’s chair/desk as a physical indicator
* erecting physical shields at high-interaction areas (e.g., reception)
* minimising patient congestion in the waiting room by
  + limiting the number of people on the premises at any one time
  + having patients wait in their cars or outside until the GP or nurse is ready.
  + spacing furniture in the waiting room
  + encouraging patients to call ahead to book an appointment rather than walk in.

1. Infection-control training

All members of the practice team, including GPs, nurses, and reception and cleaning staff, will undertake infection-control training.

All training will be documented and include:

* completion of Department of Health [COVID-19 infection control training](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training)
* completion of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care [e-learning modules](https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/infection-prevention-and-control/infection-prevention-and-control-elearning-modules) on the principles of infection prevention and control
* review of the RACGP [*Infection prevention and control standards*](https://www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/practice-standards/standards-for-other-health-care-settings/infection-prevention-and-control) (5th edition)
* ensure team members are aware of their role when managing a patient presenting with – or exhibiting symptoms suggestive of – COVID-19.

1. Use of personal protective equipment

Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is critical in limiting the spread of COVID-19. All members of the practice team will:

* ensure standard precautions, including hand hygiene, cough etiquette and appropriate waste-management techniques, are maintained
* be trained in donning and doffing PPE
* wear PPE appropriate to the patient presentation and as per advice from the local public health unit
* dispose of all used PPE in accordance with standard precautions.

1. Environmental management and cleaning

Our practice will regularly clean and disinfect shared spaces, surfaces, and communal items. Our practice will:

* enhance air flow by opening windows and doors in shared spaces (where and when appropriate) and optimizing fresh air flow in air conditioning systems (by maximizing the intake of outside air and reducing or avoiding recirculation of air)
* minimize the volume of equipment in clinical areas and waiting rooms to reduce the cleaning burden and risk of transmission
* minimize the sharing of clinical and administrative equipment between team members
* adhere to strict environmental cleaning as per the most current advice from the Department of Health’s [Coronavirus (COVID-19) Environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for health and residential care facilities](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-principles-for-health-and-residential-care-facilities) or our local public health unit
* clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces with detergent and disinfectant wipe/solution between each episode of patient care – using a cleaning detergent followed by a disinfectant, or a two-in-one product with cleaning and disinfecting properties
* require team members who are cleaning an area or equipment possibly exposed to SARS-CoV-2 to wear fresh non-contaminated gloves, a surgical mask, and eye protection
* provide training to all staff members on environmental cleaning requirements (this training will be documented)
* maintain a cleaning log.

1. Record-keeping

To aid contact tracing in the event a patient, team member, contractor, or any visitor to the practice tests positive for COVID-19, our practice will:

* maintain a record of all patient appointments (including recording people accompanying the patient), team member work times, and contractors/visitors to the practice, including entry and exit times
* maintain these records for a minimum of 28 days.
* Anyone entering the clinic is required to sign in with the QR code made available.

1. Practice team management and limiting interactions in closed spaces

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between practice team members, we will:

* regularly communicate with all team members regarding the requirement to not attend the practice if they have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, regardless of how mild, and will encourage testing in line with local public health unit advice
* support any team member who tests positive for COVID-19, or is identified as a close contact or is required to self-isolate – including by making them aware of their leave entitlements
* encourage physical distancing in common areas (i.e. tea room), through organization of furniture, floor markings and signage
* encourage tea breaks/lunchbreaks to be taken outside
* stagger breaks to limit the number of people in common areas
* encourage all team members to provide their own drinking vessels and cutlery
* require all team members to thoroughly clean communal items (e.g. cutlery) immediately after use by washing with hot water and detergent or by placing them in the dishwasher to be washed on the hottest possible setting
* ban the sharing of food on site (e.g. cake and dips).

1. Responding to a positive case, or close contact, in the practice team

If a member of the practice team tests positive to COVID-19, our practice will:

* contact the local public health unit and follow their advice
* follow the direction of the local public health unit regarding cleaning of the practice
* ensure the team member does not return to the practice until they meet the criteria for release from isolation, and as instructed by the local public health unit
* assist the local public health unit in contact tracing by proving records of all patients, team members and visitors who have attended the practice during the period in which the team member was potentially infectious (as defined by the local public health unit).

[Refer to the RACGP resource [*Responding to a COVID-19 case in the practice team*](https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/covid-19-resources/infection-control/responding-to-a-covid-19-case-in-the-practice-team)]

Plan review

This plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of Medicine on Second as well as current legislation requirements and public health directives. The plan will be reviewed on or before 01/02/2022.

Public health unit contacts

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| --- | --- |
| State/territory | Public health unit contact |
| Australian Capital Territory | 02 5124 9213 (business hours) 02 9962 4155 (after hours) |
| New South Wales | 1300 066 055 |
| Northern Territory | 08 8922 8044 1800 008 002 |
| Queensland | 1300 017 190 |
| South Australia | 1300 232 272 |
| Tasmania | 1800 671 738 |
| Victoria | 1300 651 160 |
| Western Australia | 08 6373 2222 |

Further resources

RACGP

* [*COVID-19 infection-control principles*](https://www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/practice-management/managing-emergencies-and-pandemics/managing-pandemics/covid-19-infection-control-principles)
* [*Managing patients who present with respiratory symptoms*](https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/covid-19-resources/other-health-issues/managing-patients-with-respiratory-symptoms)
* [*Responding to a COVID-19 case in the practice team*](https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/covid-19-resources/infection-control/responding-to-a-covid-19-case-in-the-practice-team)
* [How to don personal protective equipment](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/Poster-How-to-don-PPE.pdf)
* [How to remove and dispose of personal protective equipment](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/Poster-How-to-remove-PPE.pdf)
* [Patient alert poster – Symptoms](https://www.racgp.org.au/getmedia/249b759d-bdce-48f0-89cb-bb283f3cd068/Patient-alert-poster-Coronavirus-A3-v9-Updated-15-April-2020.pdf.aspx)
* [Patient alert poster – Masks](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/Patient-alert-Masks-A3.pdf)

Federal Department of Health

* [COVID-19 infection control training](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training)
* [CDNA national guidelines for public health units](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-novel-coronavirus.htm)
* [Coronavirus (COVID-19) environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for health and residential care facilities](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-principles-for-health-and-residential-care-facilities)
* [Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance on use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in non-inpatient health care settings, during the COVID-19 outbreak](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-in-non-inpatient-health-care-settings-during-the-covid-19-outbreak)

Safe Work Australia

* [COVID-19 Information for workplaces](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces)

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*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future.*

ID-242