



Latest news, 9 March 2020: COVID-19

Brisbane South PHN is supporting our general practices to prepare for and help limit the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus) in our region. We are working with government, peak bodies and the Metro South Hospital and Health Service (MSHHS) to deliver timely and accurate information, and are committed to working with you to ensure our primary health care workers are informed, supported and equipped to deliver safe, high-quality health care to our communities in regard to COVID-19.

As part of our role, we aim to provide you with:

- latest news updates (previous versions can be found [here](#))
- timely government and clinical information for general practice (resources for general practices in the Brisbane South PHN can be found [here](#))
- resources to enable safe health care delivery e.g. masks, updated guidelines etc.

For further information please contact us on 1300 467 265 or your Area Account Manager at support@bsphn.org.au

Clinical updates

- People that have travelled from mainland China, Iran or South Korea are required to self-quarantine for 14 days.
- People that have travelled from Italy must practice social distancing (maintain a distance of 1.5 metres between you and other people when out and about in public) and avoid crowds.
- If you are returning from **Italy**, and you work as a health care worker or as a residential aged care worker, you should not attend your regular work for 14 days from the date you departed.

It is recommended that clinicians should consider testing people with clinically compatible illness that have been:

- in close contact with a suspected case of COVID-19, or
- have **any history of international travel** in the 14 days before the onset of symptoms.
- all health care and aged care workers in Queensland with respiratory symptoms should be tested for COVID-19 due to the risk of transmission to vulnerable patients. Additional guidance on advice for health care and aged care workers is available [here](#).

Countries considered to pose a higher risk of transmission can be found [here](#).

Immediately contact **Metro South Public Health Unit 07 3156 4000** if you encounter a suspected case and for further guidance regarding next steps and specimen collection. For a list of approved centres for collection of specimens for COVID-19 virus testing please refer to ([Mater](#), [QML](#) or [SNP](#)).

People who undergo testing should be managed as suspect cases and isolated until the results of testing are known. A cautious approach to infection control is recommended, including standard, contact and airborne precautions, and asking people suspected of having the infection to wear a surgical mask.

A number of people in the community have been issued quarantine orders and are self-isolating in their homes for the mandatory 14-day period, with support from Red Cross and Queensland Health. Queensland Health nurses are conducting home visits to review these people and provide them clearance.

MSHHS is establishing fever clinics to test and treat people in the Brisbane south region. More information on these clinics and their location will be provided when it is available.

COVID-19 resources for general practice

Brisbane South PHN have coordinated with RACGP Queensland to develop practical resources for general practice on COVID-19. This includes guidance/flowcharts for receptionists and clinicians, posters and how to record care in practice software. These resources are available [here](#).

Events and workshops - register now for information sessions focused on the local health system response to COVID-19 for primary care and general practice in collaboration with MSHHS, MSHHS Public Health Unit and other relevant stakeholders. An information session focused on Residential Aged Care Facilities will be held:

- 17 March 2020 - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - our region's response](#)
- 24 March 2020 - [RACF Outbreak Management and COVID-19 update](#)
- 30 March 2020 - [2020 Influenza and COVID - 19 update](#)

Guidance for primary health and community health workers, and the latest updates are available from the [Queensland Health website](#). Please note that as this is an evolving situation and these documents may be updated.

RACGP have a range of online resources and guides to support general practice, including [a practical guide to pandemic planning for general practice](#).

For information related to non-clinical enquiries or advice not specifically related to a suspected case contact 13 HEALTH on 13 43 25 84.

Queensland Health has an asset library of resources for health professionals, including key messages, on COVID-19. [Download a poster](#) for your practice, or browse the full Queensland Health [asset library here](#).

Access to surgical masks

Brisbane South PHN is distributing surgical masks to general practices and pharmacies with a demonstrated need, for example:

- where there is no local supply available commercially
- where general practices and pharmacies serve a population which may be more likely to have been exposed to the COVID-19
- where practices and pharmacies have an unusual number of patients presenting with respiratory symptoms.

These surgical masks are for patients who present to general practice and pharmacies with suspected COVID-19, and for practice staff who are at risk of exposure, and are not for resale or general use.

[A fact sheet on the use of surgical masks in accordance with the AHPPC national guidelines on the prevention and control of coronavirus outbreak is available here.](#)

If your practice or pharmacy requires surgical masks, please contact Brisbane South PHN by emailing support@bsphn.org.au. Surgical masks have been provided by the Australian Government and supplies are limited.

Access to P2/N95 masks

Brisbane South PHN is distributing P2/N95 masks from the national emergency stockpile. **These P2/N95 masks are only for General Practitioners who confirm they are undertaking specimen collection for COVID-19 in their surgeries.** To access these masks for this purpose please complete the [online form](#).*

Note that patients that require testing for COVID-19 are recommended to be referred to nominated specimen collection centres ([Mater](#), [QML](#) or www.snp.com.au)

*P2/N95 masks have been provided by the Australian Government and stocks are limited. These masks will be issued to general practices on a first come, first served basis, until stocks run out. A limit of one P2/N95 mask per General Practitioner applies.

Background information

In December 2019, an outbreak of a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19), began in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The latest information indicates evidence of human-to-human transmission. Symptoms include fever, difficulty breathing, non-specific upper respiratory tract infection symptoms such as cough and sore throat and chest radiographs showing bilateral pneumonic infiltrations. No vaccine or specific treatment is currently available.

Further information

The [Department of Health](#) will provide regular updates as more information becomes available.

Queensland Health has launched a web page with [information for health care workers and the general public](#).

For additional information on COVID-19 visit the [World Health Organization website](#).

[Visit the Queensland Health website for more information](#)