



23 February 2022

Omicron modelling available

[Updated modelling](#) that reflects the recent emergence of the Omicron strain of COVID-19 in WA was released yesterday. The modelling explores how this new variant affects WA's plan to transition to living with COVID-19.

Important considerations that have impacted the modelling include the:

- very different nature of Omicron, which evidence has shown to be substantially less severe than the Delta strain, albeit far more transmissible
- levels of immunity within the WA population as a result of high levels of vaccination, including significant booster uptake
- trajectory of the current outbreak and how it impacts the risk assessment of opening our borders.

System Alert and Response

All staff are reminded that the WA health system will move to a full amber (COVID-19 Alert) level on the [System Alert and Response \(SAR\) framework](#).

The decision will assist hospitals and health services to navigate the increased risks of COVID-19 transmission that come with increased case numbers, in a consistent and coordinated way.

The move to full amber came into effect from 17 February for the Perth/Peel, South West, Wheatbelt and Great Southern regions.

Other regions will move to amber level at different times, based on the risk level for their geographic area:

- The Pilbara region moved to interim amber level on 17 February and will move to full amber on Monday 28 February.
- The Kimberley, Mid-West, and Goldfields will moved to interim amber on 21 February and full amber on Monday 28 February.

COVID-19 medicines available

The Commonwealth Department of Health has authorised a limited number of COVID-19 medications which are available through the National Medical Stockpile, to treat WA patients:

- who present with a positive COVID-19 test (PCR or Rapid Antigen Test (RAT))

AND

- meet the required eligibility criteria (which includes presenting within 5 days of symptom onset and vulnerable populations who are considered as high risk of hospitalisation).

Access to these medications requires confirmation by the prescriber that the patient fulfils the necessary criteria and approval by a delegated Department of Health Infectious Disease Physician. Patient consent is also required before commencing treatment.

Availability of these medications is expected to fluctuate and ongoing supply will be at the discretion of the Commonwealth.

Governance documents, patient information sheets and consent forms are available on the Department of Health webpage: [COVID-19 information for health professionals](#), in the Clinical guidelines accordion.

Check back for additional guidelines for hospitals, GPs and Community Pharmacists, which will be available soon.

Community healthcare practice guidelines

[The COVID-19 guidelines for healthcare practices](#) in the community in a high and very high caseload environment (the Guidelines) will assist in assessing the risk following a COVID-19 exposure.

Healthcare practices are at high risk of transmission of COVID-19, and they are considered different to general workplace settings due to the potential susceptibility of patients, and their duty of care.

The Guidelines will ensure that healthcare practices in the community can risk assess COVID-19 exposure and ensure continuity of critical services, particularly in remote and rural WA, and that healthcare practitioners are better positioned to support patients with their ongoing health needs.

One year of vaccinations

Yesterday, 22 February 2022, marked one year since WA Health's COVID-19 Vaccination Program began at a pop-up Pfizer clinic at the Hyatt Hotel in Perth.

Since then almost 5.6 million vaccinations have been delivered at hundreds of State-run clinics and at more than 1100 participating GPs, pharmacies and health services across WA.

So far:

- 98.8% of the 12+ population have received a first dose
- 95.6% of the 12+ population have received a second dose
- 57.3% of the 16+ population have received a booster.

These figures are impressive, and all health staff involved in the vaccination program should be proud of their efforts in challenging times and ever-changing circumstances during the past 12 months.

The hard work is continuing, as the team vaccinates children aged over 5 years, delivers boosters, and engages with at-risk communities.

Aged care sector weekly webinars

WA aged care peak bodies, Leading Age Services Australia (LASA) and Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA) are co-hosting weekly webinars for aged care sector providers and stakeholders in WA.

Presenters will cover a range of operational updates related to delivering aged care services during the COVID-19 outbreak, including PPE, outbreak management plans, surge workforce, visitor access and more. A live Q and A session will follow presentations each week.

Interested staff are welcome to [register](#) for future sessions.

COVID-19 staff update webinar

All WA health system staff are invited to weekly COVID-19 update webinars with the Director General, Chief Health Officer and other senior health executives.

Webinars are scheduled each week on Tuesdays – visit the [Health Point home page](#) to access the MS Teams invitation as times may vary.

Next week's webinar at 10:30am on Tuesday 1 March with feature guest speaker Dr Ed Raby, Infectious Diseases Consultant from South Metropolitan Health Service to discuss all things personal protective equipment (PPE).

[Yesterday's webinar](#) featured presentations from Dr Paul Armstrong, Deputy Chief Health Officer, and Dr Sumit Sinha-Roy, Deputy Director Clinical Services, Royal Perth Bentley Group, on the science and implementation of Rapid Antigen Testing.

Recordings of [previous webinars](#) are also available.

Message Authorised by: Director, Office of Director General