



Increased COVID-19 caseload

As Western Australia experiences a surge in COVID-19 cases, staff are reminded to continue to practise physical distancing where possible when at work and in the community.

Masks are required in all high-risk settings, including healthcare, and encouraged in other settings where physical distancing is not possible.

Remember, if you're unwell or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, get tested, stay home and wear a mask when required.

The existing [staff furlough policy](#) related to close contacts with low or high impact on services should continue to be used. Staff who are asymptomatic close contacts may be called back to work under the existing circumstances described in this policy.

Furloughed staff should discuss their return to work arrangements with their manager before attending a shift.

The WA health system leadership team recognises the increased pressures from high caseloads, general demand and staff furlough, and thanks all staff for their ongoing professionalism and dedication.

Updated COVID-19 vaccination advice

[ATAGI has updated advice](#) about when people who have had SARS-CoV-2 infection should receive a subsequent COVID-19 vaccine dose.

It is now recommended that all people should wait for 3 months after confirmed COVID-19 infection before they receive their next COVID-19 vaccine dose.

The next scheduled dose should then be given as soon as possible after this period.

Waiting for a 3-month period after infection before COVID-19 vaccination is intended to optimise protection for that person, as a longer gap between infection and vaccination is likely to lead to a better immune response and result in longer protection from reinfection.

This change in recommendation applies to all people eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccination (i.e. from 5 years and above), regardless of how many COVID-19 vaccine doses they have received.

It does not apply to other vaccines (for example, influenza vaccinations) which can continue to be administered as usual.

Temporary booster exemptions

A person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 is exempt from receiving a booster vaccination for a period of 4 months from the date of their infection.

Approved evidence must be presented for inspection, recording and/or retention of a copy by the employer or the owner of the premises where the person works.

For more information visit the [Department of Health website](#).

WA COVID-19 Vaccination Program staff return to WA Health

The governance of the WA COVID-19 Vaccination Program has transferred back to the Department of Health under the Chief Health Officer.

With WA having reached the 80 per cent third dose milestone, the bulk of the work of the Vaccine Commander has been completed and he will return to his substantial role within the WA Police Force from 20 May 2022.

While the vaccination program has been successful in achieving some of the highest coverage rates in Australia, there is still a lot of work to be done.

The protection of at-risk groups remains the focus of the program where every effort is being made to protect those groups and provide the opportunity for vaccination, including the winter booster, for those eligible.

Influenza vaccination program

Staff can now complete the [WA Health staff influenza immunisation program registration form](#) (external site) using VaccinateWA.

The [WA Health Staff Member Influenza Vaccination Program Policy](#) requires all staff to complete the influenza form by 30 June each year to either:

- consent or decline to the influenza vaccination
- state that they have already received the influenza vaccination elsewhere in that calendar year.

Staff vaccination clinic dates and locations will be published to the [staff intranet](#) in coming days, which also has further information about the healthcare worker influenza vaccination program.

Free influenza vaccinations for WA Health staff in COVID-19 vaccination clinics

From next week WA Health employees can attend any COVID-19 vaccination clinic to get their free influenza vaccination, in addition to staff clinics at healthcare sites.

Bookings are not needed, staff can walk into a convenient clinic and show their WA Health ID to receive their free influenza vaccine.

While the influenza vaccination is not mandatory, employees are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated to help protect patients and colleagues within the health system.

Early federal election voting options

[Early voting options are available](#) in the upcoming federal election for people affected by COVID-19, including:

- voting early at a pre-polling centre
- applying for a postal vote
- telephone voting.

All staff are encouraged to consider the different ways to vote and plan how they will cast their vote if they are required to isolate on the day of the election.

Department of Health resources

COVID-19 information and resources have been updated on the following the easing of public health social measures, including the COVID-19 [Guidelines for public hospital discharge and inter-hospital transfer of positive or suspect COVID-19 cases.](#)

Visit the [Department of Health](#) and [HealthyWA](#) websites for more information..

Message Authorised by: Director, Office of Director General