Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

# SHICC PUBLIC HEALTH BULLETIN #17

## Tuesday, 22 March 2022 16:00 Hours

This bulletin has been authorised by the Deputy Incident Controller – Public Health,
Dr Revle Bangor-Jones

## COVID-19 case and vaccination numbers

- **Summary**: as of Tuesday, 22 March, in Western Australia (WA), there have been:
  - 99,467 confirmed cases of COVID-19 notified
  - 60,703 people recovered from COVID-19
  - 2,855,840 COVID-19 PCR tests conducted
- **WA:** Daily snapshot and Vaccination dashboard
- **National:** Current National Status & Australia's vaccine roll-out
- **Worldwide**: WHO Situation Reports and WHO Dashboard

## Living with COVID

### Chief Health Officer advice

The latest advice from the Chief Health Officer is available here.

### Safe isolation and quarantine

Updated advice about how to isolate and quarantine effectively is available on the HealthyWA website, including how to protect others, care for others, and what to do when living with those at greater risk of serious illness. The advice is also available as a printable factsheet. Refer to the 'What is isolation and quarantine and how do I do so safely?' accordion.

Refer to the 'Looking after yourself in quarantine and isolation' accordion for advice about food and medication access during isolation and quarantine, what to do in an emergency and how to access medical assistance.

### COVID-19 Care Plans

It's important that plans are in place in case you or someone in your household needs to isolate. Care Plans include information about you, your health and details of your plans for the care of adults, children and animals in your care, should you need to go to the hospital. Care Plans for all adults and children should be completed and placed somewhere easy to find (e.g. on the fridge or beside the bed). They can also be shared with your GP, hospital staff, and family or support person.

Refer to the 'COVID-19 Care Plans' accordion on the 'Staying Safe' page of HealthyWA.

### Taxi and rideshare safety

Updated advice for rideshare and taxi drivers and passengers is available at the Department of Health website. Refer to the 'Travel, State quarantine facilities, accommodation and shared living' accordion.

## Elective surgery

Private hospitals will resume short-stay surgeries from Wednesday, 23 March 2022, after a review of the pause on performing certain surgeries. Day and single night stay Category 3 and non-urgent Category 2 surgeries will restart. There is no change to booking at public hospitals.

## COVID-19 case resources

Resources are available for people who return a positive COVID-19 test result. HealthyWA contains information about looking after yourself, a 'what to do' checklist, quarantine and isolation information, COVID-19 positive children advice, and a symptom diary. The testing and isolation protocols, among other resources, are available on WA.gov.au.

COVID-19 cases and their family / caregivers are encouraged to refer to the resources on HealthyWA and WA.gov.au regularly to access the most up to date information.

## State-run clinic testing guide

A guide to getting a COVID-19 test at a State-run clinic for different cohorts of people (e.g. close contacts, school close contacts or symptomatic people) is available on HealthyWA. This allows staff and the community to easily identify whether a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or a rapid antigen test (RAT) will be offered at a State-run testing clinic, when testing is not required, and what may occur when wait times for a PCR test exceed two hours.

## Face mask exceptions

People who are unable to fulfil the requirement to wear a face covering (mask) under the Directions **must** have a supporting medical certificate issued by a medical practitioner currently registered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). This is referred to as an 'approved medical certificate' in the Directions.

The medical certificate does not need to state the condition that makes mask wearing unsuitable. Use the AHPRA website to search for a medical practitioner. Refer to WA.gov.au for mask wearing requirements and HealthyWA for mask advice.

## Mask use guidance

Updated guidance on the use of face masks in the community, and healthcare and high-risk, client-facing workplaces has been provided by the Department of Health.

Face mask advice, including advice on mask wearing for children, is available on HealthyWA.

## Workplace RAT use

The *Guidance for the use of RATs in workplaces* recommends that workplaces **do not** use RATs for widespread screening of asymptomatic staff.

RATs are most effective when they are used to test people with symptoms of COVID-19.

The guidance provides further advice for higher risk workplaces and asymptomatic critical worker close contacts.

## Resources for the immunocompromised

Printable patient information sheets for the immunocompromised have been developed by South Metropolitan Health Services to provide advice on how to stay safe, including during social gatherings.

## COVID-19 ICU capacity

A 24-bed intensive care unit (ICU) at Royal Perth Hospital opened to increase the State's ICU capacity. The redevelopment is optimised for COVID-19 conditions, including frequent air changes throughout the unit, separate rooms fitted with switch glass windows and a ventilation system that enables

the safe accommodation of both COVID and non-COVID patients. The facility includes 24 single rooms, including one positive pressure room, four negative pressure rooms and two rooms equipped to accommodate bariatric patients.

# Community

### TGA advice for RAT purchasing

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) released advice urging the public to only use COVID-19 RATs that are approved for use in Australia to avoid poor test performance. Consumers should refer to the TGA website before RAT purchase / use and refer to the *Obtaining approved COVID-19 rapid antigen tests* factsheet for advice.

### Public library ServiceWA grants

WA public libraries can apply for ServiceWA app assistance grants to help the community understand and use the app. ServiceWA is a convenient, secure and important tool in WA's COVID-19 response and all Western Australian's are encouraged to use it. The grant guidelines are available at the State Library of Western Australia website.

### Resources for industry and business

A 'COVID-19 in the workplace: Information for employers and employees' hub is now available on the Department of Health website. Resources include tailored advice for certain sectors (including congregate living, industrial, mining and offshore, secure facilities, education and early learning, and residential care facilities including aged care, disability and mental health) and a checklist to identify close contacts in the workplace. This advice accompanies existing guidance, including the *TTIQ (Test, Trace, Isolate and Quarantine) Plan.*

Businesses are encouraged to refer to the Department of Health and HealthyWA websites regularly for the most up to date advice.

### WA free RAT program

Every household in WA can register online to receive 15 (10 in addition to the original 5) free COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RAT) and have them delivered to their home address. Register online. People who cannot register online or who need assistance can phone 13 COVID (13 26843). Households in remote communities in the Kimberley will be distributed 20 RATs.

Free RATs will be provided at some train stations, major events, universities and shopping centres. Refer to WA.gov.au for community pop-up distribution point locations in the Perth metropolitan area.

# COVID-19 vaccination program

### Upcoming ATAGI considerations

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) is currently finalising advice to the Australian Government Minister for Health on the need for a winter dose of COVID-19 vaccine, particularly for older people, who are at a high risk of severe disease.

The development of this advice is based on a thorough review of all current and emerging evidence on COVID-19 booster doses, including data on effectiveness, waning of immunity, international program settings and national vaccination coverage.

### Getting vaccinated after testing positive for COVID-19

People who have tested positive for COVID-19 can be vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine. ATAGI recommends people have their next dose of the vaccine once they have fully recovered from the acute illness.

People can choose to defer the dose by up to 4 months after COVID-19 infection and should seek advice from their health care provider about what is best for them.

Learn more about vaccination after testing positive for COVID-19 at the Australian Government Department of Health website.

## In-home vaccinations available

Every effort is being made to vaccinate as many Western Australians as possible to protect against COVID-19, including the delivery of in-home vaccination to people who need assistance or who may not easily be able to get to a clinic, pharmacy or GP location.

Teams of vaccinators are going into residential areas to deliver vaccines to people, based on feedback from the community, local health service providers and requests registered through callers to 13 COVID (13 268 43).

Learn more on the Roll up for WA 'Vaccine information for people with a disability or require additional support' webpage, fill out the 'Further Assistance Required' online form or call 13 COVID (13 268 43).

The vaccination team can provide the COVID-19 vaccine to anyone at the household aged 5 years and older if they are eligible for a first, second or booster dose.

People do not need to have a Medicare card or photo identification to receive the vaccine.

## Book Novavax booster through VaccinateWA

The Novavax vaccine can be used as a booster for individuals aged 18 years and over, where an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (either Moderna or Pfizer) is not suitable.

Selected State-run clinics provide the Novavax vaccine. VaccinateWA has been upgraded and bookings can now be made for Novavax (first and second doses) and booster doses.

Novavax is available on the following days and locations: Kwinana (Monday), Mirrabooka (Wednesday) and Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (Sunday). Bookings through VaccinateWA are preferred for Novavax (first and second doses) and offered on the following days and locations: Kwinana (Monday), Mirrabooka (Wednesday) and Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (Sunday). Novavax is also available in the Goldfields-Esperance region at all State-run clinics and selected clinics in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions.

## Commonwealth vaccination hub this week

The Australian Government pop-up vaccination hub for individuals working in disability, aged care, childcare, food, freight and pharmaceutical distribution industries will operate at the location detailed below. People with disability, their families and carers are also eligible to attend. The hub has wheelchair access, walk-in appointments, dedicated time slots for people with disabilities and in-car vaccination availability.

| Address | Hours | Bookings |
|---------|-------|----------|
| Dianella Plaza<br><br>366 Grand Promenade, Dianella | Monday, 21 March to Friday, 25 March – 9am to 5pm<br><br>Saturday, 26 March – 9am to 4.30pm<br><br>Sunday, 27 March – 11am to 4.30pm | bookings.support@vitalityworks.com.au<br><br>Ph: 1300 662 328 |

| | Disability drop-in sessions are available from 11am to 12pm | |
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## COVID-19 vaccination clinic locations

Find the nearest metropolitan or regional COVID-19 vaccination location by visiting the Roll up for WA website.

The Comirnaty (Pfizer), Spikevax (Moderna), Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) and Nuvaxovid (Novavax) COVID-19 vaccines are being administered at participating GPs and pharmacies for eligible populations. Participating GPs and pharmacies can be found by using the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder.

## Vaccine information and resources

Please visit the sources below for more information and resources related to vaccines:
- HealthyWA – COVID-19 vaccine (for WA community), including FAQs
- WA Health – COVID-19 vaccination program (for WA health providers)
- Australian Government – Children's COVID- 19 vaccination program community kit
- Australian Government – COVID-19 vaccines hub
- Roll up for WA and Roll up for WA posters
- Keeping Culture Safe and Strong Aboriginal - COVID-19 vaccination resources
- Australian Government – COVID-19 vaccination Easy Read resources

# Directions updates

COVID-19 State of Emergency Declarations and community advice webpages summarise the latest COVID-19 Directions in place in WA. Further information can be found on WA Government website.

## New Directions
- COVID Transition (Testing and Isolation) Directions (No 6)
- COVID Transition (Level 2 Public Health and Social Measures) Directions (No 3)
- Authorisation by the State Emergency Coordinator
- Designation by the State Emergency Coordinator
- Designation of East Perth child health clinic and COVID-Ready Clinics at Duncraig and Willetton as a medical facility a person may seek urgent medical treatment, under paragraph 2(d) Schedule 4 COVID Transition (Testing and Isolation) Directions (No 5)
- Visitors to Residential Aged Care Facilities (Restrictions on Access) Directions (No 11)

# Updated factsheets
- Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines for Western Australian Residential Care Facilities Version 2
- Managing COVID-19 in a Mental Health Hostel – Guide for Clinicians (new)
- Managing COVID-19 in a Residential Disability Facility – Guide for Clinicians (new)
- Managing COVID-19 in a Residential Aged Care Facility – Guide for Clinicians (new)
- Donning and Doffing in Community Settings — updated March 2022
- Donning and Doffing in Industry Settings — updated March 2022
- Donning and Doffing in Healthcare Settings — updated March 2022
- Donning and Doffing for Healthcare Teams in State Quarantine Facilities — updated March 2022
- What to do when your COVID-19 test is Confirmed as Positive Checklist Version 2 — updated 23 March 2022

- How do I Quarantine/Isolate Safely? (new)
- What to do if you are a COVID-19 Close Contact Version 3 — updated 18 March 2022
- What to do when you test positive for COVID-19 Version 3 — updated 18 March 2022
- Guide to Getting a COVID-19 Test at a State-Run Clinic — updated 18 March 2022
- Infection Prevention and Control Advice for WA Police During the COVID-19 Pandemic Version 5

## Testing

### General population testing criteria

Any person may be tested if they have any one of the following clinical criteria: fever (≥37.5$^0$C) **OR** history of fever (e.g. night sweats, chills), without a known source **OR** acute respiratory symptoms (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat, runny nose) **OR** acute loss of smell or taste **OR** a positive or inconclusive rapid antigen test result.

### Testing locations

Testing locations are listed on HealthyWA.

### Reporting

Notify suspected COVID-19 cases by completing the notification form online or by printing the notification form (standard notifiable infectious diseases process should be followed).

COVID-19 positive rapid antigen test (RAT) results must be registered on the HealthyWA website or by phoning 13 COVID (13 268 43).

## Series of National Guidelines (SoNG)

The latest iteration was released on 22 March 2022.

## Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)

The AHPPC recently released the following statements:
- Mandating booster vaccination for disability support workers — 16 March 2022
- Mandating booster vaccinations in residential aged care workers — 15 February 2022

## Business and industry

### Resources for more information

- WA Department of Health and HealthyWA
- WA Department of Health Media releases
- Australian Department of Health
- Advice for the public (WHO)
- Advice in other languages and Translated Resources
- Advice and resources for Aboriginal people
- Covid Clinic walkthrough – in multiple languages
- Contact registers information
- SafeWA user guide
- ServiceWA user guide
- Mandatory vaccination Directions and supporting documents
- Mandatory vaccination general and industry-specific Frequently Asked Questions
- Proof of vaccination Directions, information and Frequently Asked Questions
- COVID-19 in the workplace – Information for employers and employees

health.wa.gov.au

- [Posters, signage and resources](#) for businesses

## More information

- COVID-19 Clinic ONLY Test Results Enquiry Line: 1800 313 223 (Note: NOT for GP referred testing or private pathology clinic tests)
- COVID-19 WA Public Information Line: 13 268 43 (13 COVID)
- COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Exemption Application: Visit the **G2G PASS** website
- COVID-19 WA Police Line: 131 444 to report breaches of self-quarantine, business activities, border controls and other State of Emergency Directions

## Next advice The Bulletin is issued weekly. Next issue: 29 March 2022.

**Last updated 22 March 2022**

**This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.**

health.wa.gov.au