COVID-19 News

Adelaide PHN continues to keep general practices and providers up to date with the latest COVID-19 information by providing relevant resources, support, and updates as they become available. Most recent updates include –

SA Exposure Locations

SA Health's list of COVID-19 exposure locations has expanded. Check the exposure locations and relevant public health actions here.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Supplies

SA Health can assist GPs and ACCHOs with access to purchase PPE at cost price, including N95/PFs, where they are unable to obtain supplies of these critical items via usual commercial sources. For further information please contact the SA Health Procurement Team via phone 08 8425 9200 or email HealthPSCMSCOCustomerService@sa.gov.au.

A reminder that PPE supplies are available. Please refer to our list of PPE suppliers and contact the supplier directly to place an order.

SA Health COVID Plans and Resources

These strategies will continue to be adapted every fortnight as the situation unfolds.

- Updated SA Health System-wide Response Strategy
- SA Health Acute Care Response Strategy: outlines pathways for adults, children and adolescents and pregnant women and neonates, including preparation, decanting, patient flow and response phasing.

HealthPathways SA COVID-19 Pages

HealthPathways SA has recently updated COVID pages to reflect all the current COVID-19 information, including the SA Primary Care Response Strategy. HealthPathways SA will continue to be your single source for COVID-19 information for local and national information during the coming months. We encourage all care providers to ensure staff and practitioners are confident in accessing the content provided within this state-wide channel.

For more information, access the HealthPathways SA here. If you experience any log-in issues, please contact the HealthPathways SA Team at enquiries@sahealthpathways.com.au.

Rapid Antigen Test Kits

The use of over the counter COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits is currently prohibited in South Australia. These tests are much more likely to miss cases of COVID-19 than oral and nasal swab PCR testing, particularly when there are low levels of COVID-19 in the community.

Use of RAT in South Australia will be introduced when there is spread of COVID-19 in the community. At all times, people with symptoms, even if mild, need to get a PCR test at a pathology site, not use a RAT.

To find a testing location, please visit the SA Health website.

Clarification of the COVID Exposures in Primary and Community Health Care Settings Risk Matrix

- Fit checking vs fit testing
  Fit checking of Particulate Filter Respirators (PFRs) is required for exposure assessment. Fit testing is recommended but not required to determine if someone meets the close contact criteria.

- Definition of vaccinated and unvaccinated contact
  Vaccinated/Unvaccinated contact refers to the person who has been exposed (i.e., in the primary care matrix this is referring to the staff member or patient who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19). Case refers to the person who has tested positive for COVID-19. The vaccination status of the person who already has COVID-19 is irrelevant to the exposure assessment process and will not impact on quarantine and testing requirement for someone who has had contact with the person with COVID-19.

- Length of wear for PFRs: Advice from the SA Health COVID-19 Infection Control Services Team
  The current advice as per the Department of Health's Infection Control Expert Group's use of face masks and respirators in the context of COVID-19 fact sheet states that you can use a PFR continuously for a single session of care. If removed (e.g., for a meal break or drink), it should be discarded and replaced with a new one. A correctly fitted PFR (i.e., with adequate face-seal), often becomes uncomfortable with prolonged use. Prolonged use can cause headache, thermal stress, painful pressure on the bridge of the nose and/or adverse respiratory and dermatological effects. If any of these occur the wearer is more likely to unconsciously loosen or adjust it and risk contaminating their hands and face or be noncompliant with its use. A mask/PFR should also be changed it if becomes soiled, moist, or damaged.
  For more information on infection control and PPE visit the SA Health website.

- Clarification on eye protection
  Acceptable eye protection includes face shields, closely fitted wrap-around goggles or safety glasses. Prescription glasses that do not provide side protection from droplets are not considered eye protection.

Vaccination Exemptions
COVID-19 vaccination exemptions are limited to those with a medical certificate or letter from a legally qualified medical practitioner certifying that the person:

- Has a medical exemption from receiving a TGA approved COVID-19 vaccine on either a permanent or temporary basis in accordance with the guidelines published by ATAGI; or
- Has a medical exemption on either a permanent or temporary basis from receiving the preferred vaccine as recommended by ATAGI for the person's age; or

- Has an appointment to be assessed by a medical specialist or has commenced an assessment with a medical specialist to determine whether they have a medical exemption from receiving a COVID-19 vaccine on either a permanent or temporary basis in accordance with the guidelines published by ATAGI; or
- Is currently taking part in a COVID-19 vaccine trial that has regulatory approval and a confirmed start date for participation and receipt of a TGA approved vaccine would impact the validity of the trial.

The certificate or letter must clearly outline the reason for the exemption and which direction applies to their employment. The Chief Public Health Officer or her delegate must endorse the exemption. Medical practitioners must complete an SA Health Chief Public Health Officer Immunisation Exemption Application Form and the completed form and medical certificate must be submitted to Health.NJNPExemptions@sa.gov.au.

Pop-up Vaccination Clinics

Urgent Mental Health Care Centre (UMHCC)
People experiencing mental health challenges or experiencing homelessness will have specialist support to get their COVID-19 vaccination at the UMHCC. The clinic will run **Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9.00AM – 12.00PM from 14 December** at the UMHCC – 215 Grenfell St, Adelaide. Trained Peer Support Workers will be available to help people through every step of the process. For more information, please visit the UMHCC website.

Roll Up for Our Mob – Christies Beach
Free community COVID-19 vaccination event on **Wednesday 15 December from 10.00AM to 2.00PM** at Rotary Park, Christies Beach. Enjoy free lunch, coffee, ice cream and live music by Nancy Bates. Health workers will be available to discuss vaccine concerns. Those who get vaccinated on the day will go into the draw to win great prizes and receive a thank you gift.

Mobile Clinics Across Adelaide
Mobile clinics across Adelaide are making it easier for people to get vaccinated. Mobile clinics provide first or second COVID-19 vaccination doses. Please visit the SA Health website for the full list of locations and available times.

Drive-through Vaccination Clinic - Pooraka
Adelaide's first drive-through COVID-19 vaccination clinic is now open Tuesday to Sunday from 10.00AM to 7.00PM at the SA Produce Market in Pooraka. Pfizer vaccines will be available to anyone aged 12+ years. Bookings are recommended but not essential and can be made online here.
For more information, please visit the SA Health website.

COVID-19 Guidance for Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF)
An updated Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF) Emergency Management Direction is now in effect. The following guidance and resources are available to help RACF prepare for living with COVID:
- COVID-19 Strategy for RACF
- COVID-19 Guideline for Management in RACF Flowchart
- RACF Transition Planning Checklist

- [Fact Sheet - Information for Operators RACF Emergency Management Direction](#)
- [Fact Sheet - Information for Visitors to RACF](#)
- [COVID-19 Screening Checklist for visitors of RACF](#)
- [Assessing and managing the risk: COVID exposures in hospitals and facilities co-located with hospitals](#)
- [Test, Trace, Isolate and Quarantine](#)

For further information, please visit the [SA Health website](#).

COVID-19 Testing Prior to Elective Surgery
From 1 December 2021, patients who present to SA Health sites for elective surgery should receive a COVID-19 test in the preceding 72 hours prior to attending and 48 hours prior for paediatric elective surgery patients.

There is a significant increase in risk of illness or death for patients undergoing elective surgery who are COVID-positive. Surgery is also associated with aerosol generating procedures which can put healthcare workers at an increased risk of catching the disease themselves.

Making sure patients are COVID-negative prior to elective surgery will ensure they are minimising the risks to themselves and to the staff taking care of them.

Visiting Public Hospitals
From 7 December 2021, there are new visitor guidelines for public hospital and health care services. All visitors must provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination upon entry, wear masks and not attend if they have been unwell in the past 72 hours. Unvaccinated visitors must wear PPE during their visit and undertake a COVID-19 test 48 hours after their visit.

For further information, please refer to the [SA Health website](#).

New COVID-19 Directions
The following Emergency Management COVID-19 Directions have been updated and are in effect from 8 December 2021:

- [Education and Early Childhood Settings Vaccination](#)
- [In-home and Community Aged Care and Disability Workers Vaccination](#)
- [Healthcare Setting Workers Vaccination](#)
- [Passenger Transport Vaccination](#)

More Information and Contact
Please visit our [COVID-19 provider update webpage](#) or contact our team via covid19@adelaidephn.com.au or the COVID-19 line on 8314 3698 for more information and/or support.