



# SHICC PUBLIC HEALTH BULLETIN #22

**Tuesday, 3 May 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, **3 May**, in Western Australia (WA), there have been:
  - **405,848** confirmed cases of COVID-19 notified
  - **361,369** people recovered from COVID-19
  - **3,435,129** COVID-19 PCR tests conducted
- **WA:** [Daily snapshot](#), [Vaccination dashboard](#) and [WA COVID-19 data update](#)
- **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](#).

- [Updated public health and social measures, border and vaccination requirements – 21 April 2022](#)

### Masks in healthcare settings

Masks remain [mandatory](#) in high risk settings for people aged 12 years and over, including healthcare settings in places where patients have access.

Healthcare setting means a public or private health facility where health care is primarily delivered via face-to-face services provided to residents, patients, clients and others. Masks are not mandated for healthcare settings that do not have face-to-face interaction with patients (including telehealth services, pathology laboratories and corporate areas within health facilities).

The changes described above represent the minimum public health and social measures (PHSMs) required. Individual hospital and healthcare sites are free to impose additional restrictions as appropriate to their settings.

Everyone is encouraged to consider wearing a mask, even if it's not mandatory, particularly if physical distancing is not possible.

Refer to [HealthyWA](#) for additional face mask information.

## Visitor guidelines

The *COVID-19 Visitor Guideline for WA Public Hospital and Health Services* (the guideline) has been [updated](#). Visitors to hospitals are required to register, and wear masks while on hospital premises.

All patients will be permitted a total of two standard or essential visitors, at any time.

Visitor testing will continue as per current testing regimes in the *COVID-19 Framework for System Alert and Response (SAR)*.

Refer to the Department of Health [website](#) for the most up-to-date advice.

## SAR

The [SAR](#) has been updated to reflect the updated visitor guideline. Changes include advice regarding patient testing and screening, including for inpatient surveillance. The dental guidance has also been updated to allow routine dental care to be carried out in Red alert level.

The SAR level (Red) has not changed.

## Free RATs for close contacts

Close contacts are now entitled to 10 free rapid antigen tests (RATs) to help meet [testing requirements](#).

People with **no symptoms** are required to verbally confirm if they are a close contact to access their 10 free RATs at Perth metro and regional locations listed on [WA.gov.au](#). They may also collect RATs for other close contacts in their household.

Close contacts **with symptoms** must **not** attend the collection locations and must follow the relevant [requirements](#).

Refer to the [announcement](#) for more information.

## Easing of PHSMs

From 12.01am Friday, 29 April 2022 new baseline PHSMs **were** introduced. Key changes include:

- Face masks no longer mandatory except in high risk settings. Masks encouraged where physical distancing is not possible.
- Density and capacity limits removed for gatherings, venues and events
- Proof of vaccination requirements removed for venues and businesses, however still required for hospitals and residential aged care facilities
- Asymptomatic close contacts no longer required to isolate, subject to strict protocols
- Changes for domestic and international arrivals into WA; removal of requirement for G2G Pass registration
- Remaining public health measures in school and early childhood measures removed; more RATs to be provided.

Mandatory workplace vaccination requirements remain.

Refer to [WA.gov.au](#) and the [Directions](#) for more information.

## Influenza and COVID-19

With the WA borders reopening and the easing of PHSMs, an increase of influenza is expected in 2022. Information about [influenza](#) and [COVID-19](#) is available at HealthyWA.

## COVID-19 vaccination program

### mRNA COVID-19 vaccination dose intervals

On 27 April 2022, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) [recommended](#) the dose interval between primary doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines be extended to 8 weeks.

The dose interval for the two-dose primary course of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines was previously:

- 3 to 6 weeks for Comirnaty (Pfizer)
- 4 to 6 weeks for Spikevax (Moderna).

The extended dose interval of 8 weeks has been shown to improve the immune response to vaccination and may improve effectiveness; and a longer dose interval may also reduce the risk of myocarditis and pericarditis.

The longer dose interval is particularly recommended for groups at higher risk of this side effect (people under the age of 40 years).

The dose interval can be reduced (to a minimum of 3 weeks for Pfizer or 4 weeks for Moderna) for people at higher risk of severe COVID-19 (including older adults and people with underlying medical conditions), in an outbreak setting or before international travel.

ATAGI advised the risk of myocarditis and pericarditis following Nuvaxovid (Novavax) vaccine is unknown, but vaccine providers could consider extending the interval between two primary doses of Novavax to 8 weeks (from a minimum of 3 weeks) to possibly improve effectiveness and reduce potential risk of myocarditis and pericarditis.

### COVID-19 vaccination post infection

ATAGI 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.

The updated advice reflects the lower risk of reinfection with the Omicron variant within the first 3 months following a confirmed infection, particularly if prior COVID-19 vaccine doses have been received.

It also recognises the Delta variant is no longer circulating in Australia and in the past 3 months Omicron has been the dominant variant.

This advice may change if future variants emerge and ATAGI will continue to review the evidence on protection from vaccination and infection and may update advice if required, including if a new variant emerges or another circumstance arises to cause COVID-19 vaccination to become more urgent.

## 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 – [COVID-19 vaccines hub](#)
- Australian Government – COVID-19 vaccine [fact sheets and guides](#)
- Keeping Culture Safe and Strong Aboriginal - COVID-19 [vaccination resources](#)
- Australian Government – COVID-19 vaccination [Easy Read](#) resources
- ATAGI [infographic](#) on COVID-19 vaccines and doses recommended for each age and population group

## 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 the WA Government [website](#).

### New Directions

- [COVID Transition \(Face Covering\) Directions \(No 7\)](#)
- [COVID Transition \(Testing and Isolation\) Directions \(No 13\)](#)
- [Air Travel \(Face Covering\) Directions \(No 2\)](#)
- [Authorisation of Authorised PHEOC Officers](#)
- [COVID Border Transition \(Release from Quarantine\) Directions](#)
- [COVID Transition \(International Border\) Directions](#)
- [Cruise Vessels Directions \(No 3\)](#)
- [Maritime Crew Member Directions \(No 8\)](#)
- [Proof of Vaccination Directions \(No 6\)](#)
- [Transiting Aircraft Passengers Directions \(No 6\)](#)
- [Visitors to Hospitals and Disability Support Accommodation Facilities Directions](#)

## Updated factsheets

- [What to do if you are a COVID-19 close contact Version 7](#)
- [What to do if you are a COVID-19 case Version 7](#)
- [I have COVID – what should I do?](#)
- [Get COVID Ready](#)
- [What is COVID and how does it spread?](#)
- [Management of Acute Behavioural Disturbance in COVID-19 Version 3.1](#)
- [WA Health COVID-19 Framework for System Alert and Response Version 8](#)
- [COVID-19 Visitor Guideline for WA Public Hospital and Health Services Version 11](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidelines for Maternity Services Version 4.1](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidelines for Renal Dialysis Version 2.4](#)
- [Guidelines for Cruising in Western Australia – Updated 22 April 2022](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidelines for Neonatal Services Version 5.2](#)

## Testing

### General population [testing criteria](#)

Any person may be tested if they have any one of the following clinical criteria: fever ( $\geq 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) **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.

## 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
- [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 WA Police Line: 131 444 to report breaches of quarantine, business activities, border controls and other State of Emergency Directions

**Next advice** The Bulletin is issued weekly. Next issue: **11 May 2022**.

**Last updated 3 May 2022**

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

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