

# Guidance for GPs on the pathways for confirmed COVID-19 positive patients

## GP Fact sheet

### Guidance for General Practitioners on the pathways for confirmed COVID-19 positive patients

This interim guidance is for General Practitioners (GPs) who have referred their patient for COVID-19 screening and/or have been notified that their patient is COVID-19 positive.

In order to ensure all COVID-19 patients are assessed and monitored throughout their illness, SA Health has put in place a state-wide response. This fact sheet outlines this response, and describes the pathway of care for COVID-19 patients who may be usually under your care.

#### Initial Risk Screen

An assessment of COVID-19 patients is necessary to determine the most appropriate location for the period of isolation. If ordering or performing the test, you should complete an initial risk assessment for each patient, to determine if they can safely isolate at home whilst they await test results. Please see Attachment 1 for a risk screening tool that you can use to do this.

#### The COVID-19 GP Assessment Team

SA Health has a COVID-19 GP Assessment Service to support the care of people who have tested positive for COVID-19. The COVID-19 GP Assessment Team are notified by the Communicable Disease Control Branch (CDCB) of patients who test positive and conduct a review of suitability for home isolation and monitor them to the point of release from isolation.

For patients who test positive, the COVID-19 GP Assessment Team will contact the patient to undertake a comprehensive home isolation risk assessment and refer patients into the Metropolitan Referral Unit (MRU) for monitoring. Once it has been determined that a person can isolate at home, the COVID-19 GP Assessment team will notify you, as the usual GP that your patient has tested positive. You will be provided with contact details for the COVID-19 GP Assessment Team in case you have critical information to provide about the patient.

The GP Assessment Team will refer all COVID-19 positive patients to the MRU. This unit will assist with organising any supports the patient might need to safely isolate at home, including organising alternate hotel accommodation if required.

# Guidance for GPs on the pathways for confirmed COVID-19 positive patients

## GP Fact sheet

### Ongoing Assessment for confirmed COVID-19 patients

COVID-19 patients will **receive daily review** of their symptoms and ongoing suitability for home isolation. The GP Assessment Team and SA Health monitoring services will work together to do this during the required isolation period.

The daily review is based on the consideration of clinical and other factors including:

- > severity of COVID-19 related clinical symptoms;
  - Respiratory – have you been coughing?
  - Have you had any changes in your breathing or shortness of breath?
  - Do you have a sore throat?
  - What has your temperature reading been? Has it been greater than  $\geq 38$  C?
  - Have you had any headaches?
  - Other symptoms? Specify.
  - How are you feeling overall?
- > pre-existing medical conditions and supportive care requirements
- > requirement for and availability of appropriate caregivers in the home if needed
- > availability of appropriate home supports including the provision of in-reach hospital and community services
- > configuration of home environment and ability to appropriately social distance within the household
- > risk of disease spread to vulnerable persons within the household (e.g. older people and people with severe chronic health conditions, such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes or people who are immunocompromised)
- > patient and other household members capable of adhering to precautions recommended as part of home care or isolation (e.g. respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, hand hygiene, physical separation)
- > risk to the community of non-compliance with home isolation orders.

The GP Assessment Team will contact you if they require additional information in regards to the patient.

### Your role as GP during this process

The COVID-19 GP Assessment Team and SA Health monitoring services will monitor the patient's overall health through daily phone calls, however their main focus will be on COVID related symptoms. You are encouraged to continue usual care for any non-COVID related health concerns the patient may have.

You are encouraged to notify the monitoring teams if you have concerns about the patient's ability to remain in home isolation. To provide this information, please contact the MRU on 1300 110 600.

# Guidance for GPs on the pathways for confirmed COVID-19 positive patients

## GP Fact sheet

### What information will my patient receive?

The following information will be provided for COVID-19 positive patients:

- > All COVID-19 positive patients will receive a patient information pack. This pack contains a range of information to manage through home isolation.
- > They will be given an escalation plan including the contact telephone number for the treating clinical team to call if their symptoms worsen whilst in isolation.
- > All patients undergoing testing will be supplied with a surgical facemask to be worn if in close contact with other non-infected members of the household, or when seeking medical attention.
- > Instructions related to lifting of home isolation orders.

### Non-compliance with isolation

If you are concerned that your patient is not being compliant with isolation requirements:

- > For patients who are COVID-19 positive - please contact the MRU on 1300 110 600.
- > For patients who should be isolating (for example, someone who has returned from interstate within the last 14 days) but haven't tested positive, please contact South Australian Police (SAPOL) on 131 444.

### Release from home isolation of a confirmed case

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis must remain under home isolation until the risk of secondary transmission to others is low and they are formally released. The COVID-19 GP Assessment Team will manage the process of release from isolation and ensure that SA Health is notified. You will also be notified as the patient's usual GP.

The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions, and lifting of isolation orders is as per the criteria outlined in the [Communicable Diseases Network Australia \(CDNA\) Series of National Guidelines \(SoNG\)](#). As at 9 April 2020 the criteria for someone who didn't require hospitalisation is:

- at least 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms; and
- there has been resolution of all symptoms of the acute illness for the previous 72 hours

For healthcare workers and those with more severe illness, please refer to the SoNG.

### Follow-up Care

It is recommended that you conduct a face to face review with your patient 7 days after their release from home isolation. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that there has been complete resolution of symptoms and to monitor any other ongoing medical issues the patient might have. Patients will be advised to make this appointment.

# Guidance for GPs on the pathways for confirmed COVID-19 positive patients

## GP Fact sheet

### Attachment 1 – Criteria for Risk Assessment

If a person requires isolation following COVID-19 testing, it is important to consider how that person is likely to manage by considering their usual health status, functional ability, social situation and family dynamics. The questions below are designed to assist with your clinical decision making on whether someone is likely to be able to manage in self-isolation.

		Yes	No
<b>Essential Criteria which must be met for patient to self-isolate at home</b>			
1.	The person must have safe accommodation to reside in during the isolation period.		
2.	The person must have a phone connected (either mobile or landline).		
3.	The person must have the cognitive or psychological capacity which to understand the rules of isolation and the ability to recognise and act if any deterioration in their health status occurs.		
4.	If living with others, the person must have a separate bedroom where they can recover without sharing an immediate space with others.		
<b>Other factors for consideration</b>			
1.	Does the person live with others who would be at increased risk of complications from COVID-19 infection e.g. people over the age of 70, young children, pregnant women, people who are immunocompromised or who have chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions?		
2.	Can the person safely mobilise independently/or with existing mobility aid to get to the toilet and around house? Is there someone else COVID-19 positive in the house who can safely assist?		
3.	Can the person independently manage their self-care tasks such as showering, dressing, meal preparation and cleaning during the isolation period?		
4.	Does the person have any pre-existing clinical conditions that require ongoing care (such as wound care) which might be difficult to manage throughout the isolation period?		
5.	Does the person have cognitive or psychological impairment which places them or others at risk by remaining in their home alone or in isolation?		
6.	Does the person provide care for anyone else that may be impacted if he/she needs to remain in isolation?		
7.	Does the person anticipate having issues accessing supplies required throughout the isolation period?		
8.	Does the person have concerns about being able to manage financially throughout the isolation period?		
9.	Does the patient have a usual GP to transfer care to? What are the contact details?		
10.	Who is the usual chemist? What are the contact details?		

**Please note:** Is the person clinically stable? Yes  No

If **NO** then consider **referral to hospital**.