

COVID PEAK

Asymptomatic staff surveillance testing

Updated 28 August 2021



Western Health

COVID - 19

Be Safe -- Be Smart -- Be Kind

Who is eligible to participate in asymptomatic staff surveillance testing?

Any WH staff member may seek asymptomatic testing at any time. However, the Department of Health strongly recommends that staff¹ who have contact² with any patient with **confirmed COVID-19** or who work in an area that caring for high risk suspected COVID patients participate in a specific regime of regular testing.

¹All staff includes both clinical AND non-clinical staff

²Contact includes direct contact (e.g. coming in to contact with the patient or their environment) AND/OR transient contact (e.g. entering the patient room) with the patient

Why should staff participate in asymptomatic surveillance testing?

Asymptomatic testing helps detect infection early, before symptoms even have time to develop. Early identification of COVID-19 helps to protect family, colleagues and patients and enables Western Health to support our staff nice and early.

What testing is involved in asymptomatic staff surveillance testing?

Testing is comprised of four saliva samples over a 7 day period & one nasal/ throat swab once every 7 days. Testing continues for 14 days from the last exposure (i.e. last contact with the patient).

Do I have to isolate while waiting for my results?

Staff participating in asymptomatic testing do not need to isolate while awaiting their test result and can continue to work and socialise.

Recording contact with confirmed and high risk SCOVID-19 patients

All staff, regardless of whether they are participating in the asymptomatic testing program or not, are required to record when they have had contact with a patient who is confirmed to have COVID-19 or high risk SCOVID patients.

When a patient confirmed with COVID-19 is identified on a ward and where wards are caring for high risk SCOVID patients, posters with QR codes will be displayed. Staff should scan the QR code each day they have had contact with the patient.

Other staff may be requested to participate in the program through contact tracing processes or following exposures outside of the health service.

How do I commence participation in the testing program?

Please use the QR code on the ward to declare that you are eligible to participate in the program. If you have had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 patient or high risk SCOVID patients in a different setting, eg while working in in-reach or doing home visits please contact the COVID-19 Staff Enquiries Service at whscovid-19staffclinicenquiries@wh.org.au.

You may then pick up your saliva testing kit from the testing location at your site (see details below). The kit contains a QRG, materials required for saliva testing and a testing regime to help you to keep track of your tests.

Where do I go to be tested?

The COVID-19 testing clinic or a designated area will be assigned at each site for access to testing. This will be where drop off your saliva sample kit and where you will have your nasal/ throat swab taken.

You are not expected to participate in staff surveillance in your own time.

Locations of testing at each site are advertised on the [Coronavirus microsite](#) and via regular WH Operations Bulletins.

How do I prepare my saliva sample?

To prepare your saliva sample please,

1. Fill in the collection form – with your name, address, date of birth and mobile phone number
2. Label the collection tube with your name and date of birth
3. Place swab in mouth and suck on the swab for 30 seconds until saturated. Open your mouth and remove swab
4. Place the swab in to the tube and break off excess shaft at the pink marker
5. Reseal the individually labelled collection tube
6. Place the collection tube in to the ziploc section of the specimen bag and place folded request form in to open pouch of ziploc bag
7. Immediately deliver your sample to the COVID-19 testing clinic

Frequently asked questions

Am I required to complete all the tests if I work part-time hours?

It is not expected that you participate in testing on your days off. Part time staff should prioritise the nasal/ throat swabs as these have a higher sensitivity to COVID-19.

Can someone else drop off my saliva test for me?

No, we need you to drop off your own samples so that the clinician entering the sample can check your identity.

Who will have access to my information?

Your information will only be accessed by the COVID-19 Testing Clinic staff to process your COVID-19 tests, and by the COVID Response team to prepare anonymous reports for Victorian Healthcare Associated Infection Surveillance (VICNISS).

How will I receive my results?

All staff will receive their results via text or phone call.