

COVID PEAK

Asymptomatic staff surveillance testing

Updated 17 October 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 caring for high risk suspected COVID (SCOVID) 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 have time to develop. Early identification of COVID-19 helps to protect family, colleagues and patients and enables Western Health to support 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.

Staff who work in areas that consistently care for high risk SCOVID or COVID patients (such as EDs, ICU and COVID or SCOVID wards) should be on a rolling, ongoing weekly program of testing.

Staff working in other areas who have a single contact with a high risk SCOVID or COVID patient should participate in the surveillance program for 2 weeks after the contact with the patient occurred.

If staff working in areas consistently caring for high risk SCOVID or COVID patients cease working in those areas (such as EDs, ICU and COVID or SCOVID wards), and move to another area of work, they should continue with the surveillance program for 2 weeks after they moved areas.

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 patient in a different setting, e.g. 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 you 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?

Please refer to the 'Information Sheet for Staff participating in Asymptomatic Surveillance Testing' for instructions. This will be included in the saliva sample kit that you collect from the clinics and is also available on the [Coronavirus microsite](#).

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.

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.