



Friday, 24 April 2020

## **Clinical Practice During the Easing of Restrictions: Recommendations from the Australian Family Care Covid-19 Response Team**

The numbers of new cases of COVID-19 in SA has dropped to almost zero over the past week.

This decline in disease incidence has been observed even with increased community testing.

More so, the single new case identified on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April was linked to overseas travel.

There currently appears to be almost no community transmission.

Indeed, 388 of 438 cases (89%) have recovered.

The SA Government is easing certain restrictions and suggesting that groups of up to ten people may meet.

The rules of social distancing and personal hygiene remain.

**We no longer feel that it is appropriate for our clinics to remain closed. We will be opening our front doors to patients but will continue to maintain strict social distancing practices.**

General clinical guidelines we will be recommending include:

Patient Screening: Pre-appointment

- Prior to an appointment, patients' COVID-19 risk profile should be determined:
  - Do they have cold and/or flu-like symptoms (i.e., sore throat, cough, fever, fatigue)?
  - Do they meet the SA Health epidemiological criteria for COVID-19 testing (Update #17)?
  - Have they been in contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive who is still in the quarantine phase of their illness?

- **If patients answer 'yes' to any of the above questions**, COVID-19 testing should be arranged at a respiratory clinic, COVID-19 clinic, or drive-through service.
- If a high-risk patient (i.e., a patient who answers 'yes' to any of the above questions) requires an appointment unrelated to COVID-19, they should be offered a telehealth consultation. GPs may subsequently request that this appointment be offered as a face-to-face or car assessment appointment.
- **Patients who answer 'no' to all questions** can choose between a face-to-face consultation or a telehealth consultation. GPs may subsequently change the mode of consultation based on their preferences.
- Signs with clear instructions should appear on the front doors of clinics.

#### Patient Temperature Screening

- For the next two weeks, we encourage screening of patients' temperatures upon entry into the clinic.
- The staff member conducting this screen should wear a mask.
- If a patient has a temperature of 37.5 degrees or greater, they should not be allowed to enter the clinic. Telehealth or car assessment consultation should be arranged for these patients.

#### Physical Distancing and Hygiene

- Patients should ensure a 1.5m social distance strategy in the waiting-room.
- Chairs should be arranged to facilitate appropriate physical distancing.
- Hand sanitiser should be available at every workstation and be made available to patients.
- All clinics have a supply of plastic chairs.
- Chairs, medical equipment, and workstations should be cleaned frequently.
- We do not feel that there is a need to wear a surgical mask in normal work settings, but employees may wear one if they wish.