



11 APRIL 2022

Living with COVID-19

As per the latest advice from the Chief Health Officer, about a more manageable state of 'living with COVID' there have been Changes to Public Health and Social Measures from 24 March 2022. Nevertheless, the rules to Close Contacts in the health care setting have remain unchanged.

In this COVID -19 update we cover the following

- How to avoid becoming a close contact in the workplace
- What to do if you test positive for COVID-19
- Recently recovered COVID -19 cases
- The Winter Booster dose

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How to avoid becoming a close contact in the workplace

As the COVID-19 cases continue to remain high in WA, workplaces will be alerted to patients who have tested positive to COVID-19 soon after attending their appointment at your practice.

You will not be designated a close contact if:

- As a healthcare worker you were wearing appropriate PPE (fit-tested N95/P2 mask, eye protection [goggles, safety glasses or face shields], gowns and gloves) where aerosol generating behaviours or procedures have been involved in relation to a person with COVID-19.
- You have had less than 15 minutes face-to-face contact where masks* were not worn by the exposed person and the person with COVID-19,
- You have spent less than two hours within a small room or classroom environment with a case during their infectious period, where masks have been removed for this period,
- You are not a household member or intimate partner of a person with COVID-19 who has had contact with them during their infectious period.

** A surgical mask is a minimum requirement*

What if I test positive to COVID-19

All healthcare workers who test positive to COVID-19 must isolate for 7 days from the time of confirmation of a positive COVID-19 status. Many individuals may only have minimal to no symptoms during this time, but a 7 day isolation is mandatory.

After the 1 week isolation, the individual must wear a mask both indoors and outdoors for 7 days. If symptoms persist after 7 days of isolation; remain in isolation or see a medical practitioner for medical clearance.

The critical healthcare worker furloughing rules only apply to **asymptomatic close contacts who are fully vaccinated**.

Recently recovered ('recent') cases

People who have recovered from COVID-19 do not need to be tested for COVID-19 within the 12 weeks following the completion of their required isolation, including if they have symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19, are told they are a close contact, or are tested for workplace screening.

A recent case who develops symptoms associated with COVID-19 within 12 weeks should remain at home until symptoms resolve and seek advice from their healthcare provider, if required.

A recent case is not considered a close contact and does not require testing or quarantine.

Despite not being considered a close contact during the 12 week post-COVID-19 infection, it is recommended to continue to wear appropriate PPE as part of your continued risk mitigating practices in your workplace.

Further information is available in the Directions and on the HealthyWA Close contact and Quarantine and isolation pages.

Winter booster dose recommendations

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends an additional winter booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccination for selected population groups who are at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and who have received their primary vaccination course and first booster dose. This is to increase protection for people in these groups before winter starts.

These groups are:

- Adults aged 65 years and older
- Residents of aged care or disability care facilities
- People aged 16 years and older with who are severely immunocompromised (as defined in the ATAGI statement)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and older.

ATAGI does not currently recommend an additional booster dose for healthy people who are not in one of the above groups.

The additional winter booster dose can be given:

- 4 months or longer after the person has received their first booster dose, or
- 4 months after a confirmed COVID-19 infection, if infection occurred since the person's first COVID-19 booster dose.

See the ATAGI statement about recommendations for a winter booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine.