

## COVID-19: Updated Information for GPs and Community Health Practitioners

### Key Points

- **GPs and community health practitioners can call 02 5124 5498 between 8AM and 8PM 7 days a week. This line is for healthcare workers who need advice on an identified COVID-19 case, a patient who is positive, or an exposure in their workplace.**
- **This update contains information about what to do if a case or contact has been at your workplace.**

### New phone line option

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A phone line has been established for GPs and community health practitioners to call the ACT Health COVID-19 public health response team regarding an identified COVID-19 case, a patient who is positive, or an exposure in their workplace. GPs and community health practitioners can call 02 5124 5498 between 8AM and 8PM 7 days a week. It should NOT be used for queries relating to immunisation or general COVID-19 information.

### Advice if a case attends your workplace

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ACT Health will contact your site directly to inform you that a case has attended and to obtain more information. The team may ask you for the following:

- Details of the case's movements and types of interactions while on the premises (for example, time spent in the waiting room, time face-to-face with staff)
- If the case is a Health Care Worker, which patients were seen by the case and interactions with other staff
- The type of PPE worn by patients and staff
- Layout and size of the premises, airflow/air-conditioning, and details of physical barriers to transmission (such as Perspex screens)
- Name, contact details and date of birth of relevant staff
- Name, contact details and date of birth of patients and support persons in the waiting room/public areas of a premises (where this information is available)
- CCTV availability
- Cleaning type and schedule
- Use of Check in CBR App at your workplace

This information will be used to determine the period of exposure, who is a close or casual contact, and whether the site needs to be listed on the ACT Health website as an exposure location. Individuals assessed as being close and casual contacts will be notified directly by ACT Health using the details provided by the workplace and Check in CBR App data. Sites are listed as exposure locations to support identification of additional contacts (e.g., support persons of patients) and to provide consistent messaging to people who are notified as being contacts.

The need for additional cleaning of the workplace is assessed on a case-by-case basis, depending on what cleaning has already occurred.

If you have identified that a case has attended your workplace while infectious, prior to being notified by ACT Health, please start to gather the above information. Please call 02 5124 5498 to notify of an exposure to a case. Staff that are believed to be contacts should be sent home pending advice regarding testing and quarantine from ACT Health.

## **The use of PPE and its impact on contact tracing**

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Wearing PPE will minimise the chance of a staff member being assessed as a close or casual contact following exposure to a patient in their infectious period for COVID-19. Assessments include type of PPE worn by the staff member and case and type of exposure, including length of time and aerosol generating behaviours (e.g., coughing or shouting).

Staff who are wearing appropriate eye protection and a P2/N95 mask with no breaches are highly unlikely to be considered close or casual contacts.

## **Close, casual, and secondary contacts definitions**

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Information about testing and quarantine requirements of a close, casual, and secondary contact, are located on the [ACT COVID-19 webpage](#).

## **Advice if a close contact has attended your workplace**

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If a staff member is a close contact, they need to follow the [ACT Health advice for close contacts](#). This means they must:

- Immediately quarantine.
- Follow testing requirements
- Not return to work until they have been advised by ACT Health that they can come out of quarantine.

The manager needs to:

- Ensure the staff member does not attend work. If they are at work, send them home immediately.
- Advise them to follow ACT Health advice.

You do not need to send other staff home or put any patients into quarantine if a staff member, patient, or customer has attended your workplace and they are a close contact. Your staff, patients or customers are **not** secondary contacts, unless they live with the close contact, have visited the home of a close contact or they have had a close contact visit their home.

## **Advice if a casual contact has attended your workplace**

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If a staff member is a casual contact, they must:

- Immediately quarantine.
- Follow testing requirements
- Not return to work until they have completed their testing and quarantine requirements.



The manager needs to:

- Ensure the staff member does not attend work. If they are at work, send them home immediately.
- Advise them to follow ACT Health advice.

You do not need to send other staff home or put any patients into quarantine if a staff member, patient, or customer has attended your workplace and they are a casual contact. Your staff, patients and customers are **not** secondary contacts. Secondary contacts only apply to people who live with a close contact, have visited the home of a close contact or they have had a close contact visit their home.

### Advice if a secondary contact has attended your workplace

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If a staff member is determined to be a secondary contact (for example, they live with a close contact), they should not attend work. If they are at work, they should be sent home.

Secondary contacts do not need to be tested unless they have symptoms. People who have spent time with or near a secondary contact do not need to get tested unless they have symptoms.

Secondary contacts are required to quarantine for the full period that the close contact quarantines if they live with the close contact. They cannot return to work until both they and the close contact have finished their quarantine period.

Secondary contacts who do not live with the close contact can come out of quarantine once the close contact returns an initial negative test result, provided they have not seen each other since the close contact got their COVID-19 test. They can then return to work.

### More information

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<https://www.health.act.gov.au/health-professionals/chief-health-officer-alerts>

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>

Dr Vanessa Johnston

For Dr Kerry Coleman  
ACT Chief Health Officer

19 September 2021

#### Accessibility

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like an alternative format, please phone 13 22 81.



If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call 13 14 50.

For further accessibility information, visit: [www.health.act.gov.au/accessibility](http://www.health.act.gov.au/accessibility)