

Furlough guidelines for healthcare staff

As the Omicron variant of COVID-19 continues to spread rapidly, it is important that health services are able to continue operating with adequate staff.

Healthcare staff will continue to be exposed to COVID-19, however there are now important changes to when and how you must be tested, and what you must do when you attend work.

Our Infectious Diseases and Infection Control team have provided the following advice **for staff who are required to work on site in direct care work**, effective immediately, based on the updated Furlough Guidance from the Department of Health.

Please note at this point RAT kits are **not** available for non-direct care staff who are able to work from home. This is due to supply management of the kits.

Category	Directions for exposed staff
<p>Positive case Staff who receive a positive test</p>	<p>Isolate for a minimum of 7 days (inclusive) from positive PCR/RAT test date regardless of whether they are asymptomatic or symptomatic (ie if positive test on Monday come out of isolation the following Monday). Staff can return to work after this time if they are asymptomatic or if they are symptomatic and fulfil the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling well enough to work • Afebrile for at least 48 hours • Improved symptoms and cleared in discussion with Infectious Diseases or Infection Control <p>On return to work all staff should continue to wear N95 masks at all times for a further 7 days and avoid mask off contact with other staff.</p> <p>Staff do not need to complete a follow-up COVID-19 test in order to return to work after 7 days quarantine.</p>
<p>Category 1: Visit exposure site with a positive case and notified by Services Victoria app</p>	<p>No testing required unless symptomatic Monitor for symptoms and test and quarantine if symptomatic</p>
<p>Category 2: Exposure in workplace, education location or social contact*</p> <p>*Social contact means >15 minutes face to face contact or >2 hours in an indoor space with a COVID-positive person</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When notified at work to perform a RAT, don N95 mask and continue to work if negative • If your RAT is positive and you are symptomatic, liaise with your manager to leave work when safe to do so. • If your RAT is positive and you are asymptomatic liaise with your manager and ID COVID consultant, maintain Tier 3 PPE at all times. • Manager to arrange RAT kit; do daily RATs for 5 days. <p><u>External to hospital:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform manager • Manager to arrange RAT kit; do daily RATs for 5 days. • If negative you can work and when there work in N95, separate breaks outside, strictly no contact with

	<p>people without N95 mask on. No coffee / food at desks regardless of single office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor for symptoms and quarantine if symptomatic or RAT positive <p><u>Internal to hospital:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform manager • If required, risk assessment performed by manager in consultation with Infection Control and COVID consultant • Manager to arrange RAT kit; do daily RATs for 5 days. • Work in N95, separate breaks outside, strictly no contact with people without N95 mask on. No car-pooling and avoidance of public transport • Monitor for symptoms and quarantine if symptomatic or RAT positive • Additional furlough may be required
<p>Category 3: Positive household contact or household-like contact# # Location where people live and eat and sleep</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes positive RAT or PCR (Day Zero) • 7-day quarantine required with RAT Day 1 and 6 following specimen collection date of the case (unless asymptomatic and deemed critical HCW).

Family members of HCWs that have had a PCR test and waiting on results are still able to come to work. If the result is positive then follow Category 3.

If you have any questions about these directions, please contact your manager. NB: if managers have any further questions, please contact the Infection Control Team.