

WA COVID clinics to help combat coronavirus community spread

Monday, 9 March 2020

Three COVID clinics will open tomorrow to test for coronavirus. These first clinics will be located at Fiona Stanley Hospital, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Royal Perth Hospital. Clinic staff will test for coronavirus, provide information and refer people for appropriate treatment if required, to help contain community spread of the disease.

Three COVID clinics will open at major metropolitan public hospitals tomorrow (March 10) to test and support people at risk of coronavirus and to help prevent community-based transmission of the disease.

The clinics will operate from 8am-8pm, seven days a week and will be staffed by doctors, nurses and administrative staff who will follow strict infection prevention protocols.

Located in existing buildings at each hospital campus, the clinics have been established to provide testing and support for people that may be infected.

Those who should attend the clinic are people with fever and respiratory symptoms, such as a cough or sore throat and:

- have returned from overseas travel in the last 14 days or;
- are a contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case or;
- believe they have been in contact with a person infected with COVID-19.

The criteria for testing will be updated according to changes in the disease pattern in WA.

Patients will be screened and where appropriate tested, provided with appropriate information and referred for further medical treatment if necessary. If people do not meet the criteria they will not be tested.

Those individuals who are tested and well enough, will be asked to self-isolate while they await test results, which is generally 48 hours. Anyone who is confirmed to have coronavirus who does not require hospitalisation will be asked to stay in home isolation as instructed by the public health team.

More locations for COVID clinics across the metropolitan area and in regional WA will be considered if there is a need to meet future or increased demand.

The community are reminded that the clinics are not intended to replace the medical care available through their GP or at hospital emergency departments.

It is also extremely important that people who are unwell and are concerned they have coronavirus should immediately self-isolate and then seek further medical advice.

If you are attending your GP or hospital, make sure you call ahead and alert your GP surgery or hospital to your symptoms, travel history and of any recent close contact with someone who has, or you suspect may have COVID-19.

Anyone who experiences symptoms outside of clinic hours should continue to use the emergency department at their local hospital or call 000 if they are very unwell.

People are also reminded to take precautions such as covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands often with soap or sanitiser and to stay home from work or school if they are unwell.

Members of the public can telephone the COVID-19 Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 for advice and find more information, including specific clinic locations, by visiting <http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au>

Comments attributed to Health Minister Roger Cook:

"We are taking precautionary action to help protect Western Australians and to ensure we are prepared to steadfastly manage community-based transmission here.

"These COVID clinics will provide important testing hubs for people who meet the criteria to be tested.

"For most people the symptoms of the disease will be mild and will be able to be managed in self-isolation at home but we need to make sure we have measures in place to rapidly diagnose, advise and care for people who are higher risk of more severe illness.

"This measure is to make sure we are offering the best available protection to the Western Australian community, to support those who are at risk of illness, and to limit the impacts of coronavirus in our community."

Minister's office - 6552 6500