

COVID-19



Bulletin #44

20 Jan
2022

**NEWSLETTERS will be distributed in preparation and following opening of Tasmanian borders– will be fortnightly/monthly depending on changes in Australia / Tasmania.
(Last Newsletter –13 Jan 2022)**

COVID cases continue to grow in Tasmania.

How to interact, when to get tested and when to isolate have changed, as well as definitions of close contact.

For Tasmanian Government updates please see link:

<https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/facts/important-community-updates-covid19>

We will continue with the Frequently Asked Questions format to try to get information to you to help keep you safe while out and about in the field.

Please note- due to the rapid changes we are all experiencing- some directions/actions given today may quickly change and no longer be relevant tomorrow.

Question: I have tested positive for COVID. When can I come back to work?

Answer: Public Health will 'release' you from isolation at day seven if you have no symptoms (as you would be deemed as NOT being contagious). If you have symptoms, you would not be 'released' until at/around day 10. As soon as you have your confirmation that you are out of isolation following a positive COVID test you can return to work. You would not be tested for COVID in the workplace (if we were testing) for 30 days after being positive- as even though you are not infectious you continue to shed virus, it is possible to be not contagious and test positive for a lengthy amount of time after getting COVID.

Question: I am living with someone who is COVID Positive. I have isolated for the seven days with them , and they are now day seven and have been told they can leave isolation. Can I come back to work?

Answer: **This depends on advice from Public Health 1800 671 738.** Public Health say you need to isolate for seven days from last contact with someone COVID positive. If you have been able to keep separated, Public Health consider you are able to be released at same time as your household contacts release. If you have not been able to stay separate Public Health may direct you to isolate for a further seven days (ie the last day the COVID person was in isolation may be considered your last contact and therefore the commencement of your isolation period). Public Health advice is that this is decided/determined on a case by case basis- **and SEC Care cannot definitively give you an answer- you MUST seek Public Health advice.**



Question: If a client was confirmed as having COVID, and I visited them what do I do?

Answer: If we are informed a client has tested positive, we would check the roster/schedule and inform staff who have visited in the time they were likely unwell. Staff would not be deemed as close contacts and do not need to quarantine, we would ask you to monitor for symptoms.

Question: I have heard/been informed a client had COVID, and I was in their home for a three hour Social Support visit. I was wearing my mask. What do I do?

Answer: You do NOT meet the criteria for close contact, and you do not need to isolate or do anything different. HOWEVER- you should monitor for symptoms and if they develop you must contact Public Health to get a COVID test. You should also inform your Manager- if we get more information/need to change advice we will let you know.

- See definition of close contact from Tasmania Public Health here: [Advice for case contacts | Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

Question: I have a chronic disease, and have a reduced immune system, can I work?

Answer: Yes, you are able to go about your business in the community, including your work as a Community Worker/ Office based staff member. However- we encourage you to let Helen know as we will endeavour to remove you from a client/participant household if the household has a positive COVID case (for the infectious period).

Question: I have become unwell, and now have tested positive for COVID. Should I let clients I visited know?

Answer: If you test positive for COVID, you MUST let Michelle Moore and Rostering know. A representative for South Eastern Community Care will check your roster, and we will advise all clients you visited during the 48 hours prior to your positive test. Generally, clients would not be deemed as close contacts and do not need to quarantine, we would reassure them and ask them to monitor for symptoms.

Question: I have been directed to isolate, can I get paid leave?

Answer: if you have been directed to isolate by Public Health, please give proof to SEC Care and you can be paid from your existing Personal Leave. If you have no Personal Leave, you may access Annual Leave, take leave without pay or access Long Service Leave (certain restrictions and minimum amounts of time off/payments apply).

Also: There may be Government Grants you can apply for- but you need to have used all of your personal and annual leave to be entitled to Government payment/s.



Question: I am feeling quite anxious, and even angry at times with all these changes and the conflicting information. Why can't I get a simple answer to my query?

Answer: We are entering the third year of COVID, and most of us are feeling fatigued and frustrated. As COVID cases rise many staff and clients are also feeling very anxious and wondering if the work environment is safe. Because definitions and directions from Government are based on Health Advice and vary as the number of cases, COVID variants, border restrictions, etc. all change it is impossible for us as your employer/provider to give you a definite answer and say it will be the same next week! There are a number of Organisation where you may be able to get support/talk if your mental health is suffering:

What online and telephone mental health support services are available?

Beyond Blue has launched the [Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service](#) — a dedicated service for people who need counselling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Call 1800 512 348 to speak with a trained [mental health](#) professional (24 hours, 7 days a week).

Lifeline provides support to people experiencing emotional distress. You can speak with a trained crisis supporter:

- over the phone on 13 11 14, available 24 hours 7 days a week
- through online chat, every night from 7pm to midnight AET
- via text on 0477 13 11 14, between 6pm and midnight AET, 7 days a week

Kids Helpline offers counselling to children and young adults (aged 5 to 25). Call 1800 55 1800 or go to kidshelpline.com.au.

Young people can get support through **headspace centres** — whether in person at a centre, online or over the phone. There are more than 100 headspace centres across Australia.

The **Raising Healthy Minds app**, developed by the Raising Children Network, has information, ideas and guidance for parents to help them provide support for their child's mental health and wellbeing. Free from Google Play and the App Store.

24/7 Mental Health Services

Is it an emergency? If you or someone you know is at immediate risk of harm, call triple zero (000)

Suicide Call Back Service Anyone thinking about suicide suicidecallbackservice.org.au 1300 659 467	Lifeline Anyone having a personal crisis lifeline.org.au 13 11 14
Beyond Blue Anyone feeling anxious or depressed beyondblue.org.au 1300 22 4636	Kids Helpline Counselling for young people aged 5 to 25 kidshelpline.com.au 1800 55 1800
MensLine Australia Men with emotional or relationship concerns mensline.org.au 1300 76 99 76	Open Arms Women and families counselling openarms.gov.au 1800 011 046

healthdirect

[Print or download this mental health helplines infographic.](#)

Question: Where can I get more information?

Answer: You can call or email Michelle, Barry, Helen or Sharon. If urgent- please call, don't rely on emails for prompt responses! You can check the Tasmanian Government information [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

Question: Do I need a Booster/ third COVID vaccination?

Answer: We are reporting to the Government numbers of staff with Booster. It is not mandatory.....YET. We expect it will be in the near future. We encourage you all to get the booster as soon as you can!



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Testing, quarantine and isolation plan

	 Positive COVID-19 case	 Close contact
 Quarantine or isolation requirements	If you have no symptoms , isolate for 7 days from when you had your test taken. If have remaining symptoms isolate for 10 days from when your test was taken.	Quarantine for 7 days from last exposure to the case.
 Notification requirements	If you received your positive result via a RAT, you must register your result. Note that PCR test results are already recorded with Public Health. You must notify your close contacts, social contacts and workplace / education setting that you have COVID-19.	If you are a close contact you do not need to notify anyone unless you become a confirmed case.
 Testing requirements	No further testing requirements unless directed to by Public Health.	Minimum 2 tests <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test immediately - Rapid Antigen Test (RAT).• RAT on day 6 following exposure.• RAT at any time during quarantine and/or after day 7 if symptoms develop. If RATs are not available get a PCR test.
 Isolation or quarantine requirements for other members of the household	Isolate in a suitable premises. If people are in the same house they become close contacts.	Monitor for symptoms. Have a RAT if you develop symptoms. If RATs are not available get a PCR test.
 Other requirements		From day 8-14 wear a mask and avoid high risk settings except for essential purposes.


coronavirus.tas.gov.au

Note: 7 days from last exposure is determined by Public Health on a case by case basis- you MUST get Public Health advice on when you can return to work if you are a close contact living with a COVID positive person.



YOUR WELLBEING

You can contact Your Manager if you want to query any practices, unsure of what to do, or need help/advice.

Our EAP partner is Positive Solutions who are available at any time and for any reason. You can contact them with confidentiality assured on 1800 064 039.

Relating to COVID19- if you have any respiratory symptoms , feel unwell with cough of fever, sore throat or shortness of breath– please phone your GP or the Tasmanian Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.

**DO NOT COME TO WORK, EVEN IF YOU HAVE ONLY MILD SYMPTOMS-
GET ADVICE AND GET TESTED!**

THANK YOU for everything you are doing to stay safe and to care for vulnerable people in our community:

Helen, Michelle, Barry and Sharon