

Alfred Health: Staff COVID-19 pathway - exemption

To alleviate critical staffing shortages in the health system, the Victorian Department of Health has made an exemption for staff who are willing to continue to work onsite and do not have symptoms of COVID-19. The below advice applies only for Alfred Health staff and contractors on the red staff COVID-19 pathway.

Under the conditions of the exemption, staff may return to the work onsite if it is necessary for continuity of operations and if other options have been exhausted. The exemption will apply to attending work only, not any other settings during the pathway period.

After completing the [self-assessment form](#), staff who are eligible will be advised via text and email that they may return to the worksite under these conditions, with their manager copied on the email advice to support working through staffing arrangements.

For any staff who are eligible under this exemption, it is a public health requirement to follow the below instructions for the 14-day period.

If you become symptomatic at any stage while on this pathway, you must not attend work and immediately complete a new staff [self-assessment form](#).

RED-PATHWAY EXEMPTION

FIRST WEEK AFTER YOUR EXPOSURE (EXEMPT RED PATHWAY)

During this period, you will be quarantining from the community. If you can work from home, please continue to do so. If your role requires you to work onsite, you can do this but you must follow these risk mitigation strategies:

- 1. Symptoms:** You must ensure that you have no symptoms of COVID-19 before attending work. If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, you must notify your manager, complete a Self-Assessment Form, and get tested immediately (Rapid Antigen Test OR PCR).
- 2. COVID-19 testing:** You must have a negative rapid antigen test (RAT) prior to starting each rostered shift for the first five days after your exposure. There is no need to have a test on these days if you are not rostered to work. See below for how to access RATs for this purpose. On day 6 after your exposure, you must have a nose/throat COVID-19 PCR. We recommend that you perform this test at the Transit Lounge staff screening area in order to receive a timely result.
- 3. N95 use:** You must always wear an N95 mask, except when taking a break.
- 4. Breaks:** Do not share ward or department meal/tea rooms (where masks are removed). You should use a dedicated (yellow or orange) pathway tea room or take breaks alone outside.

5. **Patient care duties:** Your manager should be aware of your status as a close contact and may consider redeploying you away from high risk patients. You should not be allocated for 1:1 patient care during this time.

6. **Commuting:** You must travel directly to and from work, minimising contact with other people. You must not use car-pooling. Where possible, avoid public transport.

7. **Quarantine:** Outside of work, you are still required to be in quarantine at home.

SECOND WEEK AFTER YOUR EXPOSURE (YELLOW PATHWAY)

If your day 6 nose/throat PCR is negative and you have no symptoms of COVID-19, you are released from quarantine on day 8 after your exposure. You are free to enter the community, but we ask you to continue with the following risk mitigation strategies for the next 6 days:

1. **Symptoms:** Ensure that you have no symptoms of COVID-19 before attending work. If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, you should notify your manager, complete a Self-Assessment Form, and get tested immediately.

2. **COVID-19 testing:** You are required to have a negative rapid antigen test (or PCR) on each day you work onsite. See below for how to access these. You are also required to have a nose/throat COVID-19 PCR on day 13.

3. **N95 use:** Always wear an N95 mask onsite, other than when having a break. Exceptions to this will be when walking from a tearoom and after using the self-surveillance stations. You should then return to your work area and change to an N95 masks, as soon as practically possible.

4. **Breaks:** You should take breaks in the designated yellow/orange tea rooms or outside alone.

5. **Patient care duties:** Your manager should be aware of your status as a close contact and may consider redeploying you away from high-risk patients.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if I no longer want to work during the first 7 days after my exposure?

You are under no obligation to work during this period. If you decide that you don't want to attend work during the first week after your exposure (while you are quarantining from the community), please submit another Staff Self-Assessment form and indicate that you are not willing to work during your quarantine period.

Updated advice from the Victorian Department of Health (15 January) states that any staff who are eligible to return to the work site under the exemption, but choose not to will be entitled to a period of seven days of paid Special Leave.

How do I access to Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)?

You can access RATs at the Alfred, Caulfield Hospital and Sandringham Hospital as follows:

- **The Alfred.** Present to concierge staff in the Asymptomatic RAT Screening Clinic, White Poplar Room, Education and Innovation Hub. Open 6:45am-5pm daily. Show them this email

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notification to confirm your eligibility. You will be given a 5 pack of RAT tests which you must take away and perform before your shift, either at home, in the Transit Lounge PCR testing area or other non-clinical area, in isolation.

- **Caulfield Hospital.** Call 0400 341 380 to request collection of a RAT test kit from this site. Show them this email notification to confirm your eligibility. You will be given a 5 pack of RAT tests which you must take away and perform before your shift, either at home, in the staff PCR testing area or other non-clinical area, in isolation.
- **Sandringham Hospital.** Call 0429 525 247. Show them this email notification to confirm your eligibility. You will be given a 5 pack of RAT tests which you must take away and perform before your shift, either at home, in the staff PCR testing area or other non-clinical area, in isolation.

What should I do if I develop COVID-19 symptoms?

If you develop any COVID-19 symptoms, please submit another staff COVID-19 Self-Assessment form and present to an Alfred Health COVID-19 clinic for testing.

Where can I get tested on day 6 and if I develop symptoms?

You can access COVID-19 PCR testing at the following locations (this information is liable to change, so please check the intranet for current information):

- **The Symptomatic Staff Self-screening facility** is located in Alfred Hospital Transit Lounge. It is open 24 hours a day. It is essential that you have your ID card physically with you.
- **The Alfred COVID-19 Screening Clinic** is at The Alfred, 55 Commercial Road, Melbourne. The clinic is located at the helipad car park, next to the hospital's emergency department. Opening hours: The screening clinic is open 7 days a week, 8am-4pm. The clinic is closed at 12pm each day for a 40-minute deep clean in line with infection prevention protocols.
- **The Sandringham Ambulatory Care Centre (SACC) COVID-19 Screening Clinic** is located at the rear of the Sandringham Hospital main car park. Entry is via a footpath external to the hospital building. Opening hours: The clinic is open 7 days a week, 9am-5pm. The service is closed for cleaning at 12.30pm for 40 minutes each day.

What should I do if I test positive for COVID-19?

If you test positive for COVID-19 on a RAT or PCR test, please submit a new staff COVID-19 Self-Assessment form and isolate at home.

Further Information

We are here to help. If you have any further questions, please contact the Staff COVID-19 Advice Line on 9076 8200.

ADVICE FOR MANAGERS

Managers with staff who are eligible or may be eligible for the red pathway exemption are advised to consider the below:

1. Managers are not required to approve the exemption

2. If staff are non-clinical and could work from home, then they should be encouraged to do this rather than attending work on the exemption
3. Clinical staff should not care for a patient 1:1
4. Consider need to re-deploy away from immunocompromised patients
5. Be aware that if staff develop symptoms they should test, isolate and submit a new self-assessment form; if symptoms are in first week, tick for both symptoms and household contact
6. Staff are provided with RATs to use on the first 5 days after their exposure
7. In the second week after their exposure, they attend work on the 'yellow pathway' with surveillance as per usual process
8. If staff decide they no longer wish to work onsite in the first week after their exposure, they should submit a new self-assessment form stating nil exemption wanted