

11 March 2020

Advice to Norfolk Island Residents and Visitors regarding novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

As I'm sure you are all aware from media reports, COVID -19 (novel coronavirus) continues to spread through the world. Inevitably Norfolk Island will be affected.

While this is a serious public health issue, it is important to keep in mind that the disease mainly causes mild respiratory illness. It is, however, necessary for us to try to limit spread of the virus on the island.

At the Norfolk Island Hospital (NIHRACS) we are supported by the Randwick Public Health Unit and South East Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) in NSW. All SESLHD facilities and services have undertaken many preparatory exercises over the past two years to prepare for situations such as this. Tobi Wilson (Chief Executive of SESLHD) is confident in their ability to meet this challenge.

In the first instance, I encourage all of you to ensure that you follow infection control measures, which include hand and respiratory hygiene, at all times. It is unnecessary to use face-masks unless you are ill. <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/protect-yourself.aspx>

At present NIHRACS considers every person who has come from any country other than Australia (in the 14 days prior to their illness commencing) AND who has fever or acute respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) to be at risk of having the virus. Also considered at risk of having coronavirus is any person who was in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

If these criteria apply to you, you should not attend work, school or go out into the community. Call the hospital on 22091 for advice and you will be put through to the appropriate nurse. If you are in the at-risk group, a nurse will visit you to collect a coronavirus (SARS-2) swab. These swabs are currently sent off the island to Sydney only once a week. You will be advised to self-isolate at home or your accommodation until a negative test result is received. Should you become very ill and require medical care, please call the hospital on 22091 or an ambulance on 000. You will be seen in the hospital's separate viral assessment unit.

The elderly and patients with chronic diseases are most at risk of complications not only from this coronavirus but also from other viruses like influenza. If you are ill, be particularly mindful of avoiding the spread of infection when visiting relatives and friends or aged care residents at NIHRACS .

I strongly advise people to have an influenza immunisation once we receive them in April. We will hold flu clinics and these will be advertised on the radio and in the newspaper.

This is an evolving situation and advice concerning the NSW Health response is being regularly reviewed.

Please regularly check the NSW Health website for updates on COVID-19 [Novel coronavirus COVID-19- Find the Facts' page](#)

Dr Michelle Bonnici, Medical Superintendent, NIHRACS

GP Clinic

Norfolk Island GP Clinic aims to provide comprehensive coordinated healthcare services promoting health and wellbeing as well as managing illness.

Hours of Operation

Monday- Friday 8.30am – 5pm

Saturday & Sunday Closed

Please note the clinic is closed for lunch from 12.30 – 1.30pm.

Please call 24134 for appointments only during opening hours.

If you require medical assistance outside business hours please phone the hospital on 22091. In cases of emergency please dial 000.

Upcoming Clinic/Specialist Appointments

Please note that all specialist appointments will require a referral letter from your GP prior to booking an appointment.

Nutrition and Dietetics Clinic Every Friday afternoon

Prof Gonski (Geriatrician) Every Friday afternoon

Prof Thomas (Respiratory) 16th – 20th March

Dr McDowell and Dr Lesslie (Developmental Paediatricians) 23rd – 27th March

Do you suffer from poor sleep?

- Do you regularly have difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep?
- Do you have a problem with snoring? Has anyone ever told you that you have pauses in breathing or that you gasp for breath when you sleep?
- Are your legs “active” at night? Do you experience tingling, creeping, itching, pulling, aching or other strange feelings in your legs while sitting or lying down that cause a strong urge to move, walk or kick your legs for relief?
- Are you so tired when you wake up in the morning that you cannot function normally during the day?
- Does sleepiness and fatigue persist for more than two to three weeks?

If you answered yes to any of these questions get in touch with us today to find out more on how to book an appointment with our respiratory physician phone 24134.

Child Health Clinic

Child health Clinic is run at the GP Clinic every Wednesday 8:30am to 4pm every Wednesday by Janine. This clinic is for 0 – 5 year olds and includes: Developmental Assessment, Baby Growth Checks, Emotional and Social Development, Breastfeeding Support, Settling/Sleep Support and Introducing solids.

The Child Health Clinic nurse (Janine), is now doing home visits for all new Mums and Dads until baby is 6 weeks old, or longer where needed. This great new service will assist new parents and babies with the transition back to home.

Antenatal Clinic

The antenatal clinic is bi-monthly. At this appointment a midwife will take your full health history, provide pregnancy information and ensures your pregnancy is progressing well and your baby is healthy. You can also discuss any concerns you may have.

Please mention ‘Antenatal’ when making the appointment – phone 24134.

All patient information is treated as confidential.