

NIHRACS Medical Superintendent update 18 June 2020

Changes to protocols for returning residents and essential workers:

A low number of confirmed COVID-19 cases across the mainland has resulted in easing of restrictions to arrivals on Norfolk. While it is encouraging to see the number of confirmed cases on the mainland remaining low, I urge you to consider that our only risk of COVID on Norfolk is incoming passengers. Fortunately the highest risk individuals (those from overseas countries) will still be required to quarantine for 14 days before coming to Norfolk.

I realise that many people are becoming bored with discussion about COVID and the “new way of life” that we have had to adopt at this time. However, within NIHRACS we have a vulnerable group of patients who are treasured family members to many of you. In addition we have in our community a number of people who could become seriously ill should they be infected with COVID. I therefore appeal to the community to show leadership with regards to maintaining sensible measures of infection control. Avoid large gatherings that are not essential and if possible avoid close contact with new arrivals to the island for the first 14 days. Maintain physical distancing in all situations, as this has still been shown to be the best way of avoiding spread of infection. I would advise as soon as the COVIDSafe app is available on Norfolk that you download this. If we were to get a positive case on the island, this will assist greatly with contact tracing.

Face masks:

The wearing of a face mask is controversial but in general the advice from public health is that a face mask is useful if a person is ill, to prevent spread of the virus if they cough or sneeze. However, the better advice would clearly be to stay home and away from others rather than wear a mask. High risk situations in healthcare workers require the wearing of face masks. However, if a person feels safer wearing a face mask when in contact with others, that is a good personal choice to make.

The role of businesses on Norfolk:

I know there are many concerned residents and business owners on the island concerned about the possibility of COVID entering our community. This is an opportunity for businesses on the island to show leadership in helping to prevent infection. The best options are still physical distancing, good hand washing, staying home if ill and practising safe cough etiquette. These preventative measures may need to remain in place for a long time yet. Australian Government resources can be found online at: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources>

Screening at NIHRACS:

Within NIHRACS we will maintain screening of all visitors, staff and patients and we appreciate your patience with this. Only essential workers will be able to work at NIHRACS after arrival on the island and they will be screened daily for symptoms.

Testing for COVID:

It remains important that anyone in the community contacts NIHRACS immediately if unwell with any symptoms that may represent COVID. A doctor will call you and decide whether you need to be seen in a separate room in our facility. PLEASE do not come to the hospital or GP clinic. If you or another is very unwell please call for an ambulance on 000.

As a reminder, the symptoms of COVID include:

- Scratchy or sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Fever
- Cough
- Excessive fatigue
- Body aches
- Headaches
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Loss of smell or taste

We do have limited on-site testing ability for COVID but will be using that only in clinical situations where it is essential to have a rapid answer so that isolation and contact tracing can begin. Most swabs will still be sent to Sydney or Brisbane on the first available flight. Persons who are unwell with suspected COVID may be put into medical self-isolation until cleared by a doctor. This may be until a result is received from the mainland.

Thank you for your ongoing assistance in helping us to keep our community healthy.

Dr Michelle Bonnici
Medical Superintendent

General Practice Clinic Update

Due to the current restrictions due to the risk of COVID-19 the main entry to NIHRACS is currently locked however the General Practice clinic is still open for business for all your health care needs and our emergency department is still operating. To decrease the risk of COVID-19 our processes have changed and Medicare is providing funding for telephone consultations where our Doctors can provide their services without you having to present to NIHRACS. If the assessing Doctor decides you need further medical intervention they will inform you on what to do next. To book appointments please phone our reception on 24134. Please continue to help us to reduce the risks of coronavirus on our small community by taking advantage of our telehealth services.

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.

Child Health Clinic

Child Health Clinic will now be run from the GP Clinic every Thursday, 8:30am to 4pm 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.

Smoking Cessation Clinic

It's hard to stop, but with help and support, you **can** quit smoking.

Quitting smoking can be one of the most difficult, yet rewarding, things a person can do. Most smokers say they would like to quit, and may have tried at least once. Some are successful the first time, but others try a number of times before they finally give up for good.

It might take time, it can be hard as your body has become dependent on nicotine, but many people have succeeded in giving up smoking. Become one of them by making a quit plan

The clinic will provide a proven approach to assisting people who wish to either quit smoking or cut down. Every cigarette not smoked is doing good for smokers' health. The clinic uses a multidisciplinary approach to match individual needs.

To make a booking for the smoking cessation clinic call the GP Clinic on 24134.

Flu Vaccines have arrived!!!

In light of the current health climate, NIHRACS will be conducting a social distancing 'drive-in' flu clinic on Friday 26 June at the grassed area in front of the netball court at Rawson Hall. **Bookings are essential.**

Conditions of drive through vaccination clinic:

1. Bookings are essential
2. Patients at ALL times must remain in their vehicle (cars only, no motorbikes or mobility scooters)
3. Every car must have a support person
4. Vehicles MUST be turned off when pulling up to the vaccination station.
5. Patients MUST wear clothing where their upper arm is exposed to allow for the vaccination to be given.
6. Patients MUST at all times obey Traffic Control Management instructions.
7. Patients are asked to remain calm and courteous at all times.

Cost of the Flu vaccination is \$20 each please bring cash with you

We are conducting these via appointments only please phone the GP Clinic on 22091 to book your appointment.

Please wait until we are open (8:30am) on Monday to make your booking.



All patient information is treated as confidential.

Physiotherapy relocation

The Physiotherapy department has now relocated to an area at the back of the hospital. On booking your appointment staff will inform you of how to access the new location. Bookings are now being made by the GP reception staff and all referrals must be generated from a GP visit.

We thank you for your support and understanding.

Advice for family and friends visiting Residents in Aged Care

COVID-19 is a major health risk for older people. The current visiting restrictions are there to protect our residents. Please note the following:

Please do not visit the Aged Care facility (Dar Randa) if you have:

- Returned to Norfolk in the last 14 days
- Been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Have a fever or symptoms of a respiratory infection such as a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath

If you wish to visit Dar Randa you will be asked questions related to the above as we are required to ask them of everyone entering the facility, including staff.

Other important notes for visitors of Dar Randa:

- Only one visitor for each Resident is allowed
- Visits should be kept short
- Visitors are required to wear a face mask
- Visits are to be held in the Resident's room, outdoors or in an area advised by staff
- All visitors must have had their influenza vaccination
- No group social activities, school or early childhood visits nor entertainment are allowed at present

You are most welcome to call your family member or friend or send a card or letter.

Many thanks for your understanding.

Health and Wellbeing Messaging Weekly Update

A reminder of the key COVID-19 prevention messages:

- Physical distancing
- Stop any Spread – hygiene
- Look after yourself and others
- Know the symptoms

New Quit Tips Hub for people wanting to reduce or quit smoking

Look after your body and mind, it's the only one you have...

COVID-19 is a "burning platform" moment for people thinking about quitting smoking. This is not only because of the growing evidence of a link between the severity of COVID-19 and smoking, but because physical distancing restrictions may have reduced some of common triggers to smoke (like Friday night drinks or 'smoking breaks' with buddies). This can make it a great time to form new routines and habits. Now may be the time to quit. There is support – Contact the GP Clinic on 22091 to book into our Smoking Cessation Clinic or check out the new Quit Tips Hub on www.quit.org.au

Remember the benefits of stopping or reducing smoking start within 1 day.

BITEBACK Online Positive Psychology Program

This program is designed to improve the overall wellbeing and resilience of young Australians aged 13 – 16 years. It is from the Black Dog Institute and is FREE. Research has shown that it can decrease symptoms of depression and anxiety and increase wellbeing in young people. For more information check out the website: www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

Cuban Salsa Dance Program change of day and time

Cuban Salsa Dance classes with Dani will now be held on Monday afternoons from 5.30 – 6.30pm at the SDA Hall on New Cascade Road. We are committed to physical distancing. No partner nor experience required. It is excellent and fun exercise. Cost is \$5.

Raised Garden Beds for Seniors Program

This wonderful program was launched on Friday 12 June with the first of (hopefully) many raised garden beds being installed for Fenella Evans. See below for a photo of the final product.

This is a joint program by the NI Men's Shed (NIMS), NI Garden Club and Health and Wellbeing (NIHRACS). NIMS have obtained some used plastic packing pallets and other materials and have come up with a great design using mostly materials that would have otherwise been disposed of. They will build the raised garden beds in the garden of those who wish to participate, fill it with soil and potting mix ready for planting. The NI Garden Club are kindly providing vouchers for participants to purchase seedlings or other gardening items.

If you are interested in finding out more or would like to register your interest to get a free raised garden bed please contact Karen Innes-Walker, Health and Wellbeing Coordinator on phone 22687 or email karen.walker@hospital.gov.nf.

We are looking for donations of more plastic packing pallets in good condition and surplus garden soil. Please let me know if you would like to donate either or both of these.

Thanks to NIMS and NI Garden Club for coming together on this wonderful project.

