

NIHRACS Medical Superintendent update 25 June 2020

Current COVID situation in Australia and overseas:

As per South East Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) CEO Tobi Wilson, this week the total number of COVID-19 cases in NSW numbered 3,150. Almost 743,000 COVID-19 tests have now been carried out in NSW. There are currently 49 COVID-19 cases being treated by NSW Health, with none in intensive care. In NSW, 2,771 people are known to have recovered. NSW Health strongly discourages travel to and from areas of Victoria with COVID-19 outbreaks until control of community transmission has been confirmed. The Victorian Government has identified the local government areas of Hume, Casey, Brimbank, Moreland, Cardinia and Darebin as the focus of current outbreaks of concern.

A total of 8,929,394 cases of COVID-19 were reported globally, including 468,331 deaths. Over the past 24 hours, there has been an increase of approximately 159,000 cases and 4,300 deaths. Over half of the new cases observed in the last seven days were reported in the United States, Brazil, the Russian Federation and India. More than half of global deaths were reported in the United States, Brazil, the United Kingdom and Italy. Resurgences are emerging in Pakistan, Chile, Peru, Mexico, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Iran, Qatar, Egypt and Colombia.

To summarise, the risk from overseas visitors still remains high. On the mainland the numbers of cases of COVID remain low although Victoria and in particular Melbourne, have had increased numbers of cases with some transmission in the community. NSW and Queensland still have low numbers of cases. It is, however, important to recognise how suddenly a resurgence of cases can occur and that the pandemic is clearly not over.

Current situation on Norfolk Island:

At present we are seeing very few respiratory or flu-like illnesses on Norfolk. The uptake of influenza vaccines remains very good and we will continue to arrange clinics to get as many residents as possible immunised.

The decision was made by EMNI to allow returning residents to come to the island without the need to quarantine for 14 days. These persons are still required to apply to the Incident Controller of EMNI to come to Norfolk. Travellers to Australia from overseas countries including New Zealand will still be required to quarantine on the mainland before flying to Norfolk. While the ideal situation would be to have screening at the mainland port of departure, no other flights to domestic destinations are screened at this time so it may be difficult to arrange.

On arrival NIHRACS is still screening passengers with questions regarding their risk (contact with a positive case and where they have come from/been) as well as taking temperatures. As numbers increase and with the arrival of tourists after 10 July, this will become more difficult as we do not have the staff to screen a large plane of passengers.

At this time, passengers from Victoria will be advised to self-isolate until a doctor has discussed the level of risk with them. If they are unwell, we will do an on-island COVID test if required. The decision will then be made by the doctor whether they can be released from the isolation or whether they are ill enough to warrant a continued period with a retest. As we have limited tests available we may have a situation where an off-island test would need to be sent away on the next available flight.

COVIDSafe advice:

I appeal to the community to assist with keeping us all safe. The messages remain the same:

- Physical distancing- 1.5m from others and avoid hugging/kissing
- Avoid large groups and gatherings if possible
- Hand hygiene – soap and water or hand sanitiser

- Stay home if ill and call the hospital/GP clinic for a telephone consult
- Do not come to NIHRACS if you are ill- call ahead. If very ill call an ambulance on 000
- Comply with our “door policy” of screening everyone who comes to our facility

I would also appeal to you all to download the COVIDSafe app onto your smartphone. This will facilitate the process of contact tracing should we have a positive case on Norfolk Island.

Acute care patients and Residential Aged Care at NIHRACS:

The personal welfare and mental health of patients and residents in our facility is of vital importance to us. We therefore still require restrictions to prevent introduction of COVID to these, our most vulnerable people. The restrictions include:

- Individuals who have returned from the mainland or overseas in the last 14 days.
- Individuals who have been in close contact with a confirmed case within the last 14 days.
- Individuals who are unwell, particularly those with fever or acute respiratory infection (for example, cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath) symptoms.
- Individuals who have not been vaccinated against influenza
- Limiting visits to a maximum of two visitors at any one time per resident
- Visits should be conducted if possible in a resident’s room, outdoors, or a specified area in the RAC, rather than communal areas with other residents
- No large group visits are permitted
- Visitors must practise social distancing where possible, including maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres.
- Visitors have a responsibility to supervise any children with them, practise hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and to comply with directions given by RAC

Myself, the managers and staff at NIHRACS thank you for your assistance in helping us to keep this community safe and healthy

Dr Michelle Bonnici, Medical Superintendent, NIHRACS

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.

All patient information is treated as confidential.

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

Dry July

Go dry in July to raise funds for people affected by Cancer. Challenge yourself to 31 days dry or have a dry(ish) July and choose 21 or 14 days.

By going Dry this July, you'll be raising vital funds for people affected by cancer, and you could experience some positive health benefits such as:

- A clearer head
- More energy
- Sleep better
- Lose weight
- Have healthier skin
- Feel a sense of achievement

Check out the Dry July website: https://www.dryjuly.com/?no_redirect=true for information on how to sign up. There is also a great calculator that allows you to estimate how much money and Calories you will save by going dry. There is also a useful health hub with some interesting mocktail and snack recipes, fitness information and lots of other lifestyle information.