

NIHRACS Weekly Update

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

COVID -19 (novel coronavirus) continues to spread across Norfolk Island.

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.

NIHRACS encourages all community members to ensure that you follow infection control measures, which include hand and respiratory hygiene, and to use face-masks in the community.

At present NIHRACS considers every person 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. If you are exhibiting symptoms the GP may request a coronavirus rapid antigen test. These swabs are conducted at the drive through testing tent at NIHRACS. 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.

NIHRACS strongly advises people to have the COVID vaccination to help prevent the spread.

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

Dr Sam Jones' Radio Interviews

Starting this week you will be able to access a recording of Dr Jones' radio interviews. To listen to these interviews please visit <https://norfolkislandhealth.gov.nf/> , click on the COVID-19 tab and scroll down to "Radio Interviews with Dr Sam Jones".

NIHRACS & Assistant Minister Visit

Minister for Regional Development and Territories Nola Marino visited NIHRACS on Saturday 5 February as part of her visit to Norfolk Island. The Assistant Minister and staff had good discussions on the transition process and current health priorities for NIHRACS and the Norfolk Island community. The Assistant Minister and staff also discussed the effective response to the recent COVID-19 outbreak on Norfolk.

Staff appreciated the opportunity to share our successes and challenges as well as talking about future plans.



Dental Clinic at NIHRACS

COVID -19 has very quickly created a new normal, disrupting some routine as we have come to know it. While the implications of the pandemic for the community of Norfolk Island continue to change on a regular basis, your dental health continues to be important.

The Dental Clinic is open with limited services and determined on a case by case basis for the time being due to new protocols of dental treatments following COVID-19 (in line with Australian Dental Association).

We ask the members of the community to be patient with us and please call the dental clinic on 22910 about your dental concerns / situation before making an appointment and arriving unannounced at the dental clinic.

Thanking all for your understanding in regards to the above.

Condoms available

The Health & Wellbeing office would like to advise that the Condom machines have been reinstalled and are now available to use. The machines are housed in the toilets behind the Commonwealth Bank/ CafeTempo, down Bun Pine Alley. The cost is \$2.00 for a box of 2 condoms, the machines will take a \$2.00 coin only. A very special thank you to Paw Paw's Pumpshed & Norfolk Mall for having the condoms available while we sourced the boxes. Thanks also to NIRC for agreeing to have the machines reinstalled and to Doug Creek for installing the machines.

Heart Foundation Walking group is back

Put on your walking shoes, the walking group will be starting up again this Sunday, 13 February at 8.00am (weather permitting). Our COVID safe plan has been approved. Walking and moving more is very good for us. It helps to improve sleep & lung capacity. Walking for just 30 minutes every day can increase cardiovascular fitness & strengthen bones. Walking also increases oxygen flow through the body.

The group meets every Sunday at 8am near the Kingston pier. You are welcome to bring your dog and/or children and there are different walking distances to choose from. If you would like to join the group, just turn up. Remember to bring your hat, water, mask (only needed if in close distance with others outdoors), hand sanitiser and have sunscreen on. For more information contact the Health and Wellbeing office on 22687.

GP Clinic Update

The General Practice clinic is still open for business for all emergency health care needs and our emergency department is still running. However to decrease the risk of COVID-19 our processes of practice have changed and Medicare is providing us funding to continue practice by having telephone consultations where our Doctors can meet your needs without you having to present to NIHRACS. If the accessing Doctor decides you need further essential medical intervention they will instruct you on what to do next. To book appointments please phone our reception on 22091. Please continue to help us limit the impact of coronavirus on our small community by taking advantage of our telehealth service.

If you require any assistance with NIPTASS forms please call our social work on 50593 or the hospital 22091. Residents have up to 12 months to lodge their NIPTAAS claim so if the refund is not urgent please delay lodgment of forms during this period.

Stay safe everybody.

Hours of Operation

Monday- Friday 8.30am – 5pm

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.

All patient information is treated as confidential.