

**Wednesday 25 March 2020 1500 hours**

**Important information for all General Practices, Community Pharmacies, Community Nursing and Aged Care Facilities – Please share this with everyone in your team**

### Swabs

- PPE is not required for seeing asymptomatic patients. PPE is a limited resource, while there is some supply now, we need to use it carefully.
- Do use PPE to assess patients who fulfil the case definition, and for patients with an acute respiratory illness who need to be seen within 2 metres.
- For more information see [Community HealthPathways > Covid-19 > Requests > Testing](#).

### Community-based Assessment Centres (CBACs) and Swabbing

- Refer to the CBAC via ERMS for swabbing if your patient can get there and they are medical stable. This is so we can do less swabbing in general practice and more in the CBAC. Ashburton CBAC is due to open shortly. CBAC information is on [Community HealthPathways > Covid-19 > Requests](#).
- In most practices the phone line is being diverted to a nurse triage line for COVID-related calls, starting gradually from today. Patients requiring testing will be given a CBAC appointment directly, or directed back to the practice if no swab is required.
- Pharmacists should refer symptomatic patients that meet the COVID-19 case definition to the patient's general practice team for swabbing or referral to the CBAC.

### Public Health Notifications for COVID

- Complete a disease notification if you are taking a swab or referring to Community Assessment Centre (CBAC) for swabs on ERMS: Public Health > Notifiable Disease – COVID-19.

### Influenza Vaccination Update

- Separate patients where possible. Ideas including vaccinating in the car or a drive through operation (check if asymptomatic from 2m away, no PPE required if well), different part of the facility, or different time slots.
- Continue to vaccinate only people over 65 year old, chronic health conditions, pregnant women and healthcare workers. We are awaiting updates from the Ministry of Health and will update you when we hear anything.
- We acknowledge distribution delays, especially in rural areas, and this is being worked on.
- New IMAC guidance issued advises if >13 years, only need to wait five minutes if: no history of severe allergic reaction, an adolescent or adult with them for 20 minutes, can contact emergency services and know when to seek advice. See HealthPathways.

### Community Referred Radiology (CRR) Reduced

- Only request urgent, cancer and non-deferrable community imaging. To cancel any existing requests, contact CRR ([crr-referrals@cdhb.health.nz](mailto:crr-referrals@cdhb.health.nz) or phone 03 364 4196). All wait-listed DXA scans are suspended though referrals will be kept. Do not refer for non-urgent imaging as requests will be declined. See [Community HealthPathways > Covid-19 Impact on local services](#).

Kind regards,

Vince Barry  
Primary EOC Controller  
Canterbury Primary Response Group

[www.primaryhealthresponse.org.nz](http://www.primaryhealthresponse.org.nz)