

Friday 24th April 2020 1600 hours

Important information for all General Practices – Please share this with everyone in your team

Public Health notification changes

- With the current emphasis on widespread testing, Medical Officers of Health in our region no longer require clinicians to notify on suspicion for every patient currently being tested for COVID-19.
- Please continue to notify on suspicion any patient being tested for COVID-19 where there is a **high risk of ongoing spread of infection**. These include:
 - Patients who have had recent overseas travel or known contact with COVID-19;
 - Situations where the patient or their household members reside or work in healthcare or aged residential care facilities;
 - Patients with a **clinical diagnosis of COVID-19** in spite of either a negative test result or not being able to be tested should also be notified as a 'probable' case.
- Advise any patient being tested for COVID-19 that they and their household members should self-isolate (stay at home) while awaiting test results. Public health staff will urgently follow up all positive test results, and will identify close contacts and determine isolation and quarantine requirements. Notify using ERMS: Public Health > Notifiable Disease – COVID-19.
- Further information is available on [Community HealthPathways > Requests and local processes](#).

Unlabelled or incorrectly labelled swab specimens

- Labs are receiving some unlabelled and incorrectly labelled swab specimens. As usual with all specimens, do take a moment to check your specimens before sending them off as they cannot process samples that do not meet labelling criteria (as on [Laboratory Tests](#) on HealthPathways).

Some Special Authority and NPPA approvals automatically extended

- There is a blanket extension of three months for special authority and NPPA approvals that were due to expire at the end of March or April 2020. Changes are visible in the Electronic Special Authority System (ESAS). See www.pharmac.govt.nz/covid19.

Kind regards,

Kim Sinclair-Morris
Primary EOC Controller
Canterbury Primary Response Group

Dr Phil Schroeder & Dr Kim Burgess
Clinical Leads
Canterbury Primary Response Group