

15th July 2020 – 1600hrs

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

Updated MoH guidance for clinicians on community testing for COVID-19

- The MoH want to ensure a sufficient number of people continue to be tested in the community.
- There remains the scope and advice to use clinical judgement.

Who to test?

- All people who are symptomatic and meet the High Index of Suspicion (HIS) criteria
- Offer a test for COVID-19 to others presenting to health services with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 **and** who are more likely to have severe consequences if they were to contract COVID-19. This group includes seniors, Māori, Pacific peoples, and those who have significant pre-existing conditions. Examples of significant pre-existing conditions are chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes
- Advise testing of all symptomatic health care workers and aged residential staff. All patients in this group presenting to primary and secondary care with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should be offered a test.

Children

The MoH guidance does not mention children, locally the CPRG advice from last week remains:

- We recommend having sensible discussions with parents and prioritise testing in children who meet the HIS criteria, where you feel it is clinically indicated, or when a parent wishes to proceed with testing and it is not contraindicated.
- In a situation where a parent has similar symptoms to a child, you could consider testing the parent.
- Do not perform NP swab in children where it could increase respiratory distress, e.g., croup or wheeze.

Which swab to use?

The MoH document mentions using either Nasopharyngeal or Oropharyngeal swabs. However, at this point:

- Nasopharyngeal swabs are the preferred specimen, and local recommendation is to continue using these.
- If a Nasopharyngeal swab cannot be obtained or is refused, a throat swab is acceptable although not preferred. If you take a throat swab use a dry swab and put it into the medium from a nasopharyngeal swab (UTM Universal transport media).
- HealthPathways will be updated shortly.

Kind regards,

Craig Watson
EOC Manager – 027 807 2097

Dr Kim Burgess
Clinical Lead (Acting)

Robyn Harris
Pharmacy Lead



www.primaryhealthresponse.org.nz