

Living with COVID-19 Pandemic checklist for General Practice

General Practice preparedness for an ongoing response to COVID-19 pandemic

Is your General Practice prepared for living with COVID-19?

This resource is designed to support preparedness and response in General Practice through the changing landscape of living with COVID-19 in our community.

November 2022



NQPHN acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Nation Peoples and the Traditional Custodians of this land. We respect their continued connection to land and sea, country, kin, and community. We also pay our respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging as the custodians of knowledge and lore.





	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does our practice have a dedicated person or persons responsible for Infection Control and/or Pandemic in the practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation standards 5th edition requires an Infection Control responsible person • In a Pandemic you should have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pandemic Leader ○ Pandemic Coordinator ○ Pandemic Communicator • One person can be all three if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP – RACGP Accreditation Standards 5th Edition <i>(Page 145 - Criterion GP4.1 – Infection prevention and control, including sterilisation)</i> 		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does our practice have a copy of the RACGP Infection prevention and control guidelines?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP Infection prevention and control guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP website – Infection prevention and control guidelines 		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does our practice have a Pandemic Policy and Procedure in place for COVID-19?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP Pandemic guides including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a Pandemic Response Plan • Managing Emergencies in General Practice – Guide for preparation, response, and recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP – Managing Emergencies in General Practice • RACGP – COVID Safety Plan • RACGP – Managing Pandemics • Australian Government DoH – Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) 		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does our practice have a Business Continuity Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the RACGP Accreditation standards and the templates as provided by RACGP to support a Business Continuity Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP – RACGP Accreditation Standards 5th Edition <i>(Page 43 - Criterion C3.3 – Emergency response plan)</i> • Emergency Response Planning Tool 		



	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does our practice need to be modified to help reduce the spread of infection?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about how your practice can best make use of space to accommodate 'Living with COVID-19' (waiting areas, tea rooms, reception, offices, and treatment rooms etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health – Minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission in a primary health care setting RACGP – Managing patients who present with respiratory symptoms in the context of COVID-19 		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has a risk assessment been performed in our practice for a pandemic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider using a risk matrix for your practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Government DoH – Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) RACGP – General Practice Management toolkit see section 6 managing risk Queensland PHN – COVID-19 in the Community Preparation Checklist Northern Queensland PHN – HealthPathways 		



	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
□	<p>Are our staff up to date with ALL immunisations? (including COVID-19, Influenza and Pneumococcal)</p> <p>Do we have an immunisation register?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a requirement of Accreditation standards 5th edition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RACGP – RACGP Accreditation Standards 5th Edition (Page 47 - Criterion C3.5 – Work health and safety) Queensland Government – Requirements for workers in healthcare settings Australian Immunisation Handbook – The Australian Immunisation Handbook Quicklinks 		
□	<p>Is there an allocated member to maintain the vaccine fridge and cold chain?</p> <p>Has the Vaccine Management Plan been updated? (if required)</p> <p>Do all staff understand the importance of cold chain management and what a cold chain breach is?</p> <p>Are staff trained in managing cold chain breaches?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider strategy for power outage (Battery backup, generator, esky, Sof-Pac Insulated Bag, etc) Printed copy of Vaccine Management Plan in the esky with a portable thermometer, torch and temperature recording book Printed copy of the Vaccine Management Plan at reception and stored with the Emergency Response Plan Consider contacting NQPHN for education opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RACGP – RACGP Accreditation Standards 5th Edition (Page 165 – Criterion GP6.1 – Maintaining vaccine potency) Queensland Government – Cold Chain Breaches Queensland Government – Vaccine Management Plan - Order, store and manage vaccines Australian Immunisation Handbook - The Australian Immunisation Handbook Quicklinks Strive for 5 Handbook - National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 		



	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
			5'		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Have all staff who administer COVID-19 undertaken Australian Government Department of Health mandatory training?</p> <p>Do clinical staff have access to PRODA and AIR?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider attending Information sessions or Webinars with TPHU on COVID-19, Influenza and Pneumococcal vaccines etc. Consider contacting NQPHN for education opportunities Regularly check NQPHN events calendar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Government Department of Health – COVID-19 vaccination training program Australian Government Services Australia – PRODA (Provider Digital Access) Australian Government Services Australia – PRODA education for health professionals Queensland Government – Using the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Northern Queensland PHN – Accessing the Australian Immunisation Register using PRODA 		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do our staff have access to resources to support their mental health and wellbeing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take time to care for ourselves Take opportunity to debrief with colleagues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Queensland PHN - Workforce support (inc. PPE ordering) 		



Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland Government – Community Recovery – Community Service Directory Black Dog institute - TEN- The Essential Network for Health Professionals 		

	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do our staff know how to triage patients for COVID-19 over the phone or face to face?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posters – questions to ask patients Have a script Triage chart for reception/nurse Consider both telephone and walk in patients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RACGP – Managing patients who present with respiratory symptoms in the context of COVID-19 RACGP – Managing COVID-19 at home with assistance from your general practice (NEW) Northern Queensland PHN – HealthPathways RACGP – Patient Alert Posters 		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do our staff understand the role of Rapid Antigen Tests in General Practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate information and updates with your team Develop clear policies within your practice for both patients and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RACGP – Rapid Antigen Tests in General Practice (need to scroll down to select the drop-down section) Australian Government Department of Health – Rapid Antigen Tests 		



	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland Government – Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) – positive result registration form 		
□	Does our team know how to respond to a positive COVID-19 case within the practice team?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an Outbreak management plan for staff (See Section 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland Government – I have COVID-19 Northern Queensland PHN – Quick link resources Northern Queensland PHN – Workforce support (inc. PPE ordering) Northern Queensland PHN - HealthPathways 		
□	Have we adequately assessed the individual response and support networks of each of our team members?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response register Assess short comings Review working arrangements and support processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland Government – Get COVID-Ready Northern Queensland PHN – Workforce support (inc. PPE ordering) 		
□	<p>Do we have measures in place to optimize the use of PPE to its full potential?</p> <p>Have you considered fit testing your staff?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohort patients Correct application and removal Adequate stockpile for your practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RACGP – Optimising the use of PPE in general practice during COVID-19 Queensland Health – Personal protective equipment (including video on donning and doffing) 		



	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
	<p>Does our practice have PPE Equipment available for staff?</p> <p>Is there enough stock for at least 4 weeks, including tissues and pathology specimen equipment?</p> <p>Is there hand sanitizing facilities and non-touch bins available for staff, patients and visitors?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct method of hand sanitizing (hand scrubbing and hand rubbing) • Cough etiquette and posters visible • Annual Fit Test Training of P2/N95 Masks • Consider contacting NQPHN for support with facilitating education and training sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Government DoH – Guidance on the use of PPE • Australian Government Department of Health – PPE for health workforce 		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does our practice have a space for PPE equipment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have PPE ready for quick access; Trolley, box etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Queensland PHN – Infection control (inc. PPE ordering) 		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do our staff understand the COVID-19 definitions and restrictions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider ensuring your staff understand the definitions as used within the relevant federal and state health departments in relation to COVID-19. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queensland Government – COVID-19 in Queensland 		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do our staff have a good understanding of the most frequently asked questions to help assist our patients?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the latest version readily accessible to staff • Provide to patients if they need reassurance on specific FAQs that have been addressed by Queensland Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Government DoH – About the COVID-19 pandemic (NEW) • Queensland Health – Stay informed COVID-19 		



	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Queensland Health – posters, FAQ for patients• Northern Queensland PHN – HealthPathways		



	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
□	<p>Can our practice identify vulnerable groups?</p> <p>Are GPMPs (Care Plans), CMAs (Comprehensive Medical Assessment and Health Assessments (75 years+ Health Assessment, Disability Health Assessment, Healthy Kids Health Assessment, ATSI 0-14 years, ATSI 15-54 years, ATSI 55 years+) up to date to assist with identifying at risk groups?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using data extraction tool e.g., PenCat or Polar • Use Practice software to search queries available. • Vulnerable groups might include older persons; pregnant women; patients with a chronic disease, and Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander patients • Consider doing Recalls to identify patients requiring Care Plans, Comprehensive Medical Assessment and Health Assessments • Consider performing Data Cleansing to identify information missing or out of date in a patients file • Consider creating a Wellness Kit and Isolation Plan with vulnerable patients who seldom attend a practice due to a medical condition or inability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Government DoH – People at higher risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) • Queensland Government – COVID-Ready: People at risk of serious illness • Northern Queensland PHN – HealthPathways 		



	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
□	Does our practice have measures in place to provide vaccinations in a COVID safe manner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider social distancing, alternative venues and sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Government DoH – ATAGI Guiding Principles for maintaining immunisation services during pandemic • Strive for 5 Quick Reference guide 		
□	Have all our staff completed the Hand Hygiene online training module?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equip your staff with all the available resources to protect themselves and others • Maintain a register • Display posters to promote Hand hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Hand Hygiene Initiative • Australian Government DoH – COVID-19 Infection control training • Queensland Health – Hand Hygiene Posters • Northern Queensland PHN – Infection Control • Hand Hygiene Australia – Learning modules 		
□	Does our practice have a cleaning policy/schedule in a pandemic situation including waste management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit Department of Health principles for Cleaning and disinfection • Refer to RACGP 5th Standards • Consider the three types of waste, General, Clinical and Related waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Government DoH – Environmental cleaning and disinfection principles • Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care – Environmental Cleaning: Information for Cleaners • RACGP – Infection Prevention and Control Standards (5th edition) 		



	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does our practice have a place to isolate patients?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Separate from other patients such as: In a separate room, Outside the practice, In a car or the patients home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">RACGP – COVID-19 infection control principles. Infection control principled for consulting with suspected cases for COVID-19		



	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
□	Does our practice know where to send people for testing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Queensland Health Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Queensland PHN – Testing patients for COVID-19 • Northern Queensland PHN – HealthPathways 		
□	Does our practice have adequate posters, information for patients?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters on front door/windows/in the waiting room • Information and posters for patients on your practice website • Place information in your Practice Newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Queensland PHN – Quick link resources • Queensland Government – Asset Library 		
□	Do our staff need further education on infection control?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP Infection Prevention and Control 5 Edition Standards • Accreditation Infection Control checklist • Blood and Body Spills and how to use a spill kit • Consider contacting NQPHN to support with facilitating training sessions and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP – Infection Prevention and Control Standards (5th edition) • Hand Hygiene Australia – Learning modules • Department of Health – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for health and residential care facilities • RACGP – Infection control in pandemics poster 		



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit Test Training for P2/N95 Masks • Hand Hygiene Australia training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Queensland PHN – Infection Control • Queensland Health-PPE and Infection Control (including Fit Check for P2/N95 masks) 		
--	--	---	---	--	--

	Questions to ask	Resources or ideas	Links to information	Yes/No	Comments / to do
□	Does our practice know where to get information on COVID-19 for our practice and patients?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to main websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Department of Health • Commonwealth Department of Health COVID-19 vaccines website • Commonwealth Department of Health COVID-19 vaccine information and resources for aged care providers • Commonwealth Department of Health COVID-19 information for people with disability • Commonwealth Department of Health COVID-19 vaccines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • Queensland Health • HealthPathways • Northern Queensland PHN. 		



Further information

- RACGP – [Winter Planning Toolkit](#)