

Western NSW Primary Health Network COVID-19 TRIAGE PROTOCOL

Community Pharmacy

Protection of yourself and your staff is equally as important as protecting the community. You cannot help others if you are sick yourself. Routine monitoring of your staff is recommended, every morning check temperatures (below 38 degrees C), symptoms of URTI or malaise. Avoiding the "working unwell" will prevent your store from being a hotspot. Like the first aid approach, assessing the danger for yourself and others should be the starting point! Stay safe and keep looking after the community.

There is **no need to wear PPE unless you are a direct-contact staff member**, treating a patients directly who report as being unwell. Pharmacists do not need to wear PPE when offering advice to patients reporting as being otherwise well, provided they maintain a safe distance of more than 1.5m. A mask for the unwell patient will allow additional safety precautions, if available.

Disinfect all flat surfaces after every customer if possible, and after any unwell patient as a priority. Using soapy water or 60% alcohol in water sprayed onto the surface and wiped with paper towel (single sheet), which is discarded, would be ideal. Other antiviral preparations are also acceptable.

ALL CUSTOMERS

All Customers should

- Use hand sanitiser on entry (have a staff member distribute into the hands if possible)
- Not touch anything unless necessary
- Cover your mouth and nose if you cough or sneeze using your elbow or a clean tissue (if you have one)

Treat all patients respectfully, however assume they are unwell

- Use all personal hygiene methods to protect yourself
- Stay 1.5m apart
- Wash hands regularly (or hand sanitiser)

All stores should minimise the number of customers in the store at any one time if possible

- This may be through the use of a staff member on the door to monitor the number of patients/customers to allow for adequate distancing
- This staff member should have PPE available, however only needing to use this if a patient reports to be unwell.
- Ask patients as they enter if they are feeling unwell, have a cough, sore throat to remain outside the store

Use of wireless and contactless payment methods should be implemented wherever possible – ask all patients to use contactless payment

- If use of cash is necessary, use a glove to receive money/issue change and then wash hands. Alcohol spray may be used on money if the patient reports to be unwell

ANY CUSTOMER REPORTING TO BE UNWELL

Any customer that is unwell

- Stop them at the door and ask them to remain outside the store
- Ask the customer what it is that they require and see if this product can be delivered or prepared for them without entry
- If this is not possible, provide a mask for the patient and assist them with their inquiry
- Give information to the patient including the HealthDirect number 1800 022 222 and 24/7 COVID-19 Hotline 1800 020 080

All stores should minimise the number of customers in the store at any one time for adequate distancing

- This may be through the use of a staff member on the door to monitor the number of patients/customers to allow for adequate distancing
- This staff member should have PPE available, and offer to the patient/customer who has indicated they are unwell

Use of wireless and contactless payment methods should be implemented wherever possible – ask all patients to use contactless payment or credit card payment via the phone

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PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The use of PPE **routinely is not recommended** for staff in community pharmacy.

This is due to the issues that arise from:

- adjusting ill-fitting masks with contaminated hands
- breathing "around the seal" from ill-fitting masks
- a wet surgical mask (P1) does not offer any protection (continuous use)
- use may create complacency in staff

P1/Surgical Mask/Patient Face Shield

These are effective for stopping/slowing the spread of aerosolised viral particles from **an infected patient** if a patient:

- Puts a mask that is fitted correctly on before entering the pharmacy,
- The patient must wash or sanitise their hands after doing so.
- Or not enter the pharmacy

Medical staff can wear P1/Surgical masks but it is **not recommended for extended wear**.

P2/N95 Masks

These should be reserved for health professionals who are needing to treat a patient with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 where contact with blood or bodily fluids are likely. In community pharmacy this is very unlikely and is not routinely recommended. Clinical judgement should be implemented in all cases.

Cloth Masks

These masks do not prevent the wearer from being infected from viral infections. They do reduce/prevent aerosolised particles from being expelled from the patient. Sick or exposed patients are encouraged to wear a mask.

Immunisations

The use of PPE has not been recommended routinely, thorough screening prior to entry to the immunisation room is the most effective risk management strategy

CLEANING

Washing hands is the most effective way to reduce infective risk as it clears all soiled particles from the skin

If hand washing is not available, use of **hand sanitiser is effective** if hands are not visibly soiled

Mechanical Cleansing (i.e. wiping the surface)

Soap and water solutions to clean surface of all biological material is preferred

Use of antiseptic and antiviral cleansers

- 60-80% alcohol
- Commercially available chlorine based disinfectants
- On-site diluted bleach solutions (see manufacturer instructions or hyperlink)

Use of hazardous materials like bleach and chlorine based disinfectants are effective, however pose risk to humans – use precautions