



Riverview Medical Practice COVID Safety Plan

Implemented: 21 February 2020

Reviewed: 29 January 2021

Introduction

This plan provides members of the practice team guidance on operating in a COVID-safe manner and helps identify and mitigate risks during the ongoing pandemic.

Purpose and objectives

Our practice is dedicated to the health, safety and wellbeing of all team members, patients, contractors, and visitors. In this pandemic environment, we acknowledge additional precautions are required and that these are outlined in this COVID Safety Plan.

1. Practice access and patient flow

To control the flow of people into and through the practice, we attend to the following:

- encourage telehealth consultations (where appropriate)
- we have put social distancing into place.
- if patient/s are needed to be seen, and the waiting area is full, we ask the patient/s to wait in their car until it is time to see their treating doctor.
- we ask all patients and visitors that enter the Practice to use the hand sanitizer upon entry and exit and to wear a surgical face mask that we supply, should the patient does not have one.

- we have a management plan in place for patients presenting with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 which enables immediate isolation of that patient, as well as the requirement that the patient wear a surgical face mask to reduce risk of transmission and advise the patient to immediately attend for Covid-19 testing.
- we ask every patient if they have had any Covid-19 symptoms or if they have been overseas in the past 14 days or in contact with someone that has recently returned from overseas or had any Covid-19 symptoms and we refer them to the local Covid-19 testing Clinics at *Blaxland, Hazelbrook, and Penrith*
- we limit patient entry and exit to the *Main Front Entry door to the Practice*.
- we display information at the entrance to the practice and ensure clear messaging on our website asking patients to call ahead if they have any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 to enable appropriate triage.
- We have Covid-19 advice recorded on our Telephone on hold message, and after-hours Telephone recorded messaging.
- We also display information at the entrance to the practice outlining the requirements of entry to Riverview Medical Practice, which is to *Scan QR code prior to entering the Practice, hand sanitise, wear a mask, have an appointment, be free from symptoms consistent with COVID-19*.
- We provide access to hand-sanitiser products upon entry and exit (and at appropriate locations throughout the practice). We use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser and also have hand-washing facilities.

2. Physical distancing

While acknowledging the nature of medical care means maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 m with a patient, this is not always possible. Our practice has put in place physical distancing measures by:

- providing training to all members of the team
- erecting physical shields at our Reception Desk and high-interaction areas
- minimising patient congestion in the waiting room by
 - limiting the number of people on the premises at any one time to a maximum of 6
 - having patients wait in their cars or outside until the GP or nurse is ready.
 - spacing furniture in the waiting room
 - encouraging patients to call ahead to book an appointment rather than walk in
 - offering Telehealth Consultations
 - our Doctors and reception team wear Face Shields or surgical masks

3. Infection-control training

All members of the practice team, including GPs, nurses, reception, and cleaning staff, have undertaken infection-control training.

All training is documented and include:

- completion of Department of Health [COVID-19 infection control training](#)
- completion of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care [e-learning modules](#) on the principles of infection prevention and control

- review of the RACGP [Infection prevention and control standards](#) (5th edition)
- we ensure team members are aware of their role when managing a patient presenting with – or exhibiting symptoms suggestive of – COVID-19.

4. Use of personal protective equipment.

Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is critical in limiting the spread of COVID-19. All members of the practice team will:

- ensure standard precautions, including hand hygiene, cough etiquette and appropriate waste-management techniques, are maintained.
- be trained in donning and doffing PPE.
- wear PPE appropriate to the patient presentation and as per advice from the local public health unit
- dispose of all used PPE in accordance with standard precautions.

5. Environmental management and cleaning

Our practice regularly cleans and disinfects shared spaces, surfaces, and communal items. Our practice will:

- enhance air flow by opening windows and doors in shared spaces (where and when appropriate) and will optimise fresh air flow in air conditioning systems by maximising the intake of outside air and reducing or avoiding recirculation of air where possible.
- minimise the volume of equipment in clinical areas and waiting rooms to reduce the cleaning burden and risk of transmission.
- minimise the sharing of clinical and administrative equipment between team members
- adhere to strict environmental cleaning as per the most current advice from the Department of Health's [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for health and residential care facilities](#) and our local public health unit
- clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces with detergent and disinfectant wipe/solution between each episode of patient care – we use a two-in-one product with cleaning and disinfecting properties. (Viraclean)
- require team members who are cleaning an area or equipment possibly exposed to SARS-CoV-2 to wear fresh non-contaminated gloves, a surgical mask, eye protection and gown.
- provide training to all staff members on environmental cleaning requirements (this training is documented)
- maintain a cleaning log.

6. Record-keeping

To aid contact tracing in the event a patient, team member, contractor, or any visitor to the practice tests positive for COVID-19, our practice:

- maintains a record of all patient appointments (including recording people accompanying the patient), team member work times, and contractors/visitors to the practice, including entry and exit times.
- **utilises a contactless electronic system via a QR code to record contact details, ensuring data is stored confidentially and securely and is only used for the purpose for which it was intended.**

- maintains these records for a minimum of 28 days.

7. Practice team management and limiting interactions in closed spaces.

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between practice team members, we:

- regularly communicate with all team members regarding the requirement not to attend the practice if they have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, regardless of how mild, and we encourage testing in line with local public health unit advice.
- check the temperature of each practice team member on commencement of work. Where the person registers a temperature $>37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ they will not enter the practice and will be asked to seek further medical review
- require a verbal/written/electronic attestation from each team member at the commencement of each shift confirming they do not have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, have not been in contact with a confirmed case, and have not been directed to isolate.
- support any team member who tests positive for COVID-19 or is identified as a close contact or is required to self-isolate – including by making them aware of their leave entitlements.
- encourage physical distancing in common areas (ie tea room), through organisation of furniture, floor markings and signage
- encourage tea breaks/lunchbreaks to be taken outside.
- stagger breaks to limit the number of people in common areas.
- encourage all team members to provide their own drinking vessels.
- require all team members to thoroughly clean communal items (eg cutlery) immediately after use by washing with hot water and detergent

8. Responding to a positive case, or close contact, in the practice team

If a member of the practice team tests positive to COVID-19, our practice will:

- contact the local public health unit and follow their advice.
- follow the direction of the local public health unit regarding cleaning of the practice.
- ensure the team member does not return to the practice until they meet the criteria for release from isolation, and as instructed by the local public health unit.
- assist the local public health unit in contact tracing by providing records of all patients, team members and visitors who have attended the practice during the period in which the team member was potentially infectious (as defined by the local public health unit).

[Refer to the RACGP resource *Responding to a COVID-19 case in the practice team*]

Plan review

This plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of *Riverview Medical Practice*, as well as current legislation requirements and public health directives. The plan will be reviewed on or before *29 January 2022* or as required due to changes in legislation.

Public health unit contacts

State/territory	Public health unit contact
Australian Capital Territory	02 5124 9213 (business hours) 02 9962 4155 (after hours)
New South Wales	1300 066 055
Northern Territory	08 8922 8044 1800 008 002
Queensland	Find your nearest unit
South Australia	1300 232 272
Tasmania	1800 671 738
Victoria	1300 651 160
Western Australia	08 6373 2222

Further resources

RACGP

- [COVID-19 infection-control principles](#)
- [Managing patients who present with respiratory symptoms](#)
- [Responding to a COVID-19 case in the practice team](#)
- [How to don personal protective equipment](#)
- [How to remove and dispose of personal protective equipment](#)
- [Patient alert poster – Symptoms](#)
- [Patient alert poster – Masks](#)

Federal Department of Health

- [COVID-19 infection control training](#)
- [CDNA national guidelines for public health units](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for health and residential care facilities](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance on use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\) in non-inpatient health care settings, during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

Safe Work Australia

- [COVID-19 Information for workplaces](#)

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present, and future.