



6 September, 2021

## Keeping you safe is our priority

In response to COVID-19, we have made some important changes - so that everyone is kept safe and no one is placed at risk when coming to Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick or The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

### Safety screening points

When you come to one of our hospitals you will be asked to check in. You will be greeted by a staff member at one of our many entry points. They will take your temperature and ask you the following questions:

- Are you a staff member, patient, family member or visitor?
- Are you experiencing any cold-like symptoms?
- Do you live in a Local Government Area of concern?
- Have you visited a COVID-19 case location? \*
- Have you been in contact with someone with COVID-19?

This screening system is in place to make sure no one enters our hospitals who may have an illness that could be passed on to our patients, families or staff.

\* Visit <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/latest-news-and-updates> for COVID-19 case locations

### Masks

Wearing a face mask is currently mandatory in all NSW public hospitals. All staff and visitors over the age of 12 years are required to wear a mask inside our hospitals at all times, except while eating, drinking or sleeping. If you don't have a mask, please talk to a member of staff.

In addition to face masks, staff wear protective eye wear during face-to-face contact with patients and families.

Parents/carers are asked to put your mask on properly, before a staff member enters your child's room or bedspace. If you refuse to wear a mask, this will delay us providing care to your child and you will be asked to wait outside or leave the hospital.

We acknowledge that wearing a mask can be uncomfortable, if you need some tips, please don't hesitate to ask our staff or visit <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/health-and-wellbeing/face-masks/how-to-wear-a-face-mask>.

### Temporary visitor guidelines

Due to the increase in COVID-19 community transmission, we request that only one parent/carer accompany/visit a patient per day. One parent will be offered a bed overnight, so they can stay close to their child.



In most areas, two parents/carers can accompany their child upon admission and discharge for 15 minutes. A 15 minute 'handover' period per day is also supported while your child is in hospital, to allow parents/carers to discuss their child's care.

Unfortunately, siblings are not able to visit at this time. We encourage virtual visits using platforms like Facetime or WhatsApp. If you need access to a tablet for video conferencing, please speak to your child's Nurse Unit Manager.

To help adhere to essential physical distancing guidelines, we have also asked our staff to limit the number of team members entering wards and clinical areas to the minimum required.

We do understand that temporarily limiting visitors and minimising staff contact is challenging and will restrict visitor numbers for as short a time as we can. We also understand that there may be specific circumstances which need further consideration and we will work with you closely to determine the best and most compassionate outcome. This temporary limit is one very important way we are reducing the risk of COVID-19, and other illnesses, being brought in our hospitals.

### **Changes to clinic appointments**

To further reduce the number of people entering our hospitals, we are delivering some clinic appointments via virtual options like telehealth.

We strongly recommend that patients, and their accompanying parent/carer, coming into the hospital for a face-to-face outpatient appointment seek a COVID-19 test 24 – 72 hours prior to attending their appointment. This test can be done at a testing clinic close to home and shown to staff upon arrival.

### **Elective surgery**

As directed by NSW Health, due to the current COVID-19 outbreak, non-urgent elective surgery has been temporarily postponed at all public hospitals in Greater Sydney. All emergency surgery and urgent elective surgery will continue, without delay. Our staff are contacting families impacted by this change, to discuss their child's specific case.

It is mandatory for all patients from affected Local Government Areas and their accompanying parent/carer to obtain a COVID-19 test 24 - 72 hours prior to attending the hospital for elective surgery. We strongly recommend COVID-19 testing for all other elective surgery patients and their accompanying parent/carer. If you haven't had a test, or are still waiting for your results, please speak to your child's health care team.

### **Emergency care**

Having a sick child is never easy, but it's important to quickly seek medical care to avoid health complications.

It's completely understandable to feel anxious about catching COVID-19, but our hospitals are safe places, with our experts ready 24 hours a day to care for your kids when they need us most.

If your child is unwell or injured, we're here to help. Don't delay, visit when you need us.



### **Staff, patient and family health checks**

Every family with a booked appointment or procedure is being contacted in advance, to make sure they are not sick with cold-like symptoms. Anyone with symptoms is asked not to come to our hospitals. In addition, any staff member with cold-like symptoms, no matter how mild, will be tested for COVID-19. They will not return to work until their test comes back negative and they are symptom free.

Anyone who has visited a COVID-19 case location is asked not to come to our facilities until 14 days after they last visited that location.

### **Surveillance testing: COVID-19 testing for parents and carers**

Due to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in the community, we are requesting that all parents and carers are tested for COVID-19 every three days, while their child is in hospital. You will not need to isolate and can still visit your child while you wait for your result.

For your convenience, testing clinics are available on-site, 7 days a week. Please ask the ward clerk for a medical record number, before you attend the clinic.

- The Children's Hospital at Westmead, Outpatients Department, Level 2, 7.30am - 4pm
- Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, Outpatients Department, Level 0, 7.30am - 5pm

While your child is in hospital, if you or a member of your household is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, cough or a runny nose, let the nurse looking after your child know and they will organise immediate testing.

### **Physical distancing**

General physical distancing signs are located throughout our hospitals, to remind everyone to keep a distance of at least 1.5m from each other, where possible.

Signs are also on our lifts, asking for only two or three people or one family to travel in the lift at a time.

Our staff have also made changes to stay safe and practice physical distancing. Examples include staggering breaks and holding meetings via teleconference or Skype.

### **Cleaning, hand hygiene and infection control**

We have employed more cleaners, and follow strict cleaning and infection control guidelines.

Antiseptic hand rub is available throughout our hospitals, to make sure everyone is able to wash their hands as much as possible.

### **Supporting you in hospital**

At this ever changing time, keeping families supported and connected is important to us.

- Social workers are on hand 24/7 to support your family's physical, emotional and social wellbeing.



- Food and resources – on site café's, vending machines and pharmacies are available. A fridge and microwave is also available in most wards for your convenience. If you need to order via food delivery service, please chat to your child's nurse.
- Rest areas – our wards have areas to take a time out in, including parent/carer kitchens. Areas are also available around the Hospital where you can take a moment to yourself.
- Virtual connections – many patient bed spaces have an electronic tablet available for your use, connected to the internet. If your bed space doesn't have a built in device, please speak to a member of your child's health care team.

If you have any questions, please ask your child's health care team for more information.

### How you can stay safe

The best way to stay safe during this time is to:

- Chat to your health care provider about accessing COVID-19 vaccination
- Wash your hands regularly, for at least 20 seconds
- Cough into your elbow or a tissue
- Practice physical distancing – at least 1.5m from others
- Stay home from work or school when sick
- Talk to your health care team about your child's specific needs

### For up to date information on COVID-19

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information line on 1800 020 080 or visit:

- NSW Health: [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)
- Australian Government Department of Health: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)
- Sydney Children's Hospitals Network: [www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au)

If you speak another language and need assistance or access to a translator, please speak to a member of your child's health care team. A link to translated COVID-19 resources is also available here: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/resources.aspx>

We know this is a challenging, unprecedented time. Rest assured, we are working hard to do everything we can to protect you.

If you need any support or for further information, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of your child's health care team.

Cathryn Cox PSM  
Chief Executive  
Sydney Children's Hospitals Network