



Colleges Crossing Family Practice Policy – BAU during Covid-19 pandemic

Introduction

We are a primary health care service, aiming to continue offering quality primary care to our community during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond.

So that we can continue to provide these critical healthcare services whilst remaining safe for our staff and patients several changes to our clinical and business processes will be enacted and regularly reviewed. These areas of change include (but are not limited to)

- Keeping abreast of latest health directives from the Qld Chief Health Officer
- Increased communication and education with staff, GPs and the community regarding relevant new information, and changes to operations
- Changes to clinical service provision
- Changes to facilities and environmental cleaning
- Flexible work arrangements
- Clear directives to staff regarding managing staff illness and potential covid-19 symptoms
- Managing attendance of patients and visitors to the clinic and behaviour inside the clinic
- The usage of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Rigorously applying the usage of the Check In Qld App including the monitoring of vaccination status of all patients and visitors to CCFP in keeping with relevant State legislation
- Enforcing the mandatory vaccination of all staff, students and visitors to the clinic.

Protecting our staff

Protecting our staff at CCFP is part of our ethos of creating and maintaining a healthy environment and caring for our employed staff and independent associate GPs. Our mission to care for our staff goes above and beyond statutory requirements of workplace health and safety.

Protecting our patients, visitors and community

We aim to provide a safe clinic for patients and our community so that access to essential care is disrupted as little as possible during the pandemic. We are also aware that our response to Covid-19 will also be a positive signal of best practice and reassuring to the community. Notwithstanding these ideals, the practical nature of providing care during a pandemic will mean unavoidable changes to some operations will occur.

Internal and external communication and education

CCFP will increase internal and external communications during the Covid-19 pandemic. This will include

- Regular Facebook announcements to the community, shared to community pages
- Regular articles in the Karana Downs Chronicle
- Increased internal meetings and comms – a daily huddle for all morning staff, the outcomes of which will be circulated via BP message system every day so that staff can stay up to date especially if returning from time off or working part time. Staff can raise any concerns or challenges during these daily huddles

Changes to clinical service provision

The services that we offer at CCFP will be impacted on our current risk rating for Covid-19 (low, medium, or high). Please refer to Attachment A – Clinical Response to Covid-19.



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In general,

- All patients, carers, visitors and staff are required to use the Check In Qld app as per State legislation. The only exclusion to this will be where the person is aged under 16 without a adult guardian present, a genuine emergency or in situation where the safety of our staff would be put at risk.
- All patients, carers and visitors will have their vaccination status and Check In Qld status checked on entry to the clinic by reception staff.
- All patients, carers, visitors and staff will wear a surgical mask or equivalent whilst inside the practice. Children under 5 are excluded from this requirement. All appointment confirmations sent to patients will advise of these requirements.
- Unless in the case of genuine emergency, patients, carers and visitors who are unable to show proof of vaccination, positive Check In status and wear a mask will be directed to wait outside or in their car for further instruction by our reception team and GPs. In this circumstance the treating GP may elect to provide telehealth services only to the patient. This will be at the discretion of the treating GP.
- We have been advised by Qld Health that if a patient, carer or visitor does not comply with these lawful requests that we may call 000 and request QPS assistance.
- All patients currently with potentially infectious symptoms will be seen via telehealth only
- No aerosolising procedures (such as spirometry, nebulisers) will be undertaken during the pandemic.
- Patients will be screened prior attendance at clinic to ensure that they are not suffering from any potentially infectious symptoms
- Clinical times for face-to-face appointments will be kept to a minimum per patient – ideally under 10mins per consult where clinically appropriate.
- Only patients and essential caregivers are allowed to attend the clinic to limit foot traffic inside the clinic, no one is to attend the clinic unless essential.
- Routine healthcare for non-urgent situations, such as health assessments, driving licence review for 75+ and skin checks may be delayed during high-risk ratings.
- PPE recommendations as per Attachment A.

Facilities and environmental cleaning

In addition to our usual environmental cleaning regimen CCFP will:

- Strip all non-essential soft furnishings and reusable products from waiting and consult rooms
- Have natural air flow throughout the practice where possible (i.e. opening louvred windows in the waiting area).
- Use HEPA filtration units in all consult rooms.
- Maintain HVAC units to a high standard, with high flow via the air-conditioning fan units to all areas, incorporating external air flow rather than purely recirculated air.
- Monitor and respond to air quality in the clinic rooms using the Practice Aranet CO2 monitor
- Remove waiting, consult and tearoom chairs such that all remaining chairs are spaced 1.5m apart.
- Apply adhesive stickers to the floor to remind patients and staff to keep 1.5m apart
- Erect Perspex screening shields around our reception area.



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- Place signage at the front door asking for patients picking up paperwork to call so that reception can bring these documents outside rather than have patients entering the clinic.
- Place a hand sanitising station and face-masking supplies outside the front door so that anyone entering the clinic has ready access to these hygiene products.
- Undertake cleaning of 'high-touch' surfaces with Viraclean every 1-2 hours or more frequently as needed. High touch surfaces include door handles, EFTPOS machines, patient facing countertop and bathroom handles and rails and seating.
- Make alternative working arrangements for reception and administration staff so that they can work in more physically distanced areas of the practice, including at home when appropriate.
- Ensuring that hand hygiene stations are well-provisioned with soap, water, paper towel and hand sanitiser.
- Supply enhance facilities with a new, larger tearoom with natural and climate controlled ventilation that is large enough to meet distancing requirements for staff for breaks and for meetings.

Flexible work arrangements

In addition to our usual operations CCFP will:

- Enable GPs and admin staff to work from home via remote login where feasible. This will be useful for situations where we are rostering/cycling staff in and out of the clinic in two week cycles in high risk scenarios.
- Laptops will be made available for staff to use to work from home where needed
- High risk staff and GPs are encouraged to discuss their working arrangements with the Principal GPs so that risks can be proactively managed.

Managing unwell staff

It is anticipated that during the pandemic staff will become unwell, including with respiratory tract infections. Our management plan includes:

- Rostering with redundancy so that we can cope with absenteeism while performing all our usual tasks.
- Nil staff or GPs to attend the practice while suffering any symptoms that might be considered infectious. Staff will not be allowed to return to the clinic until their have received a negative swab results for Covid-19, and that their symptoms have resolved.
- Any staff that have been identified as contacts of Covid-19 cases are to isolate as per the CHO directives. Staff may elect to work from home in this instance.

Attending the clinic and human behaviour

It is noted that Covid-19 is more readily transmitted in certain situations, and with certain human behaviours. Inside our clinic we aim to

- Limit raised voices or voluble interactions.
- Practice good physical distancing.
- Attending to hand hygiene on entering the clinic, before and after eating, after coughing or sneezing, after going to the toilet, when changing task and after touching potentially contaminated surfaces.
- Avoid touching the face, mouth, eyes and nose.



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- Covering coughs and sneezes with crook of the elbow.
- Washing body, hair, facial hair and clothes thoroughly every day.
- Having no intentional physical contact – no shaking hands, hugging, patting backs.

Usage of PPE

CCFP will supply and instruct on usage of appropriate PPE for each circumstance. PPE usage will be driven by the current risk stratification (low, medium or high) as per Attachment A.

- All patients and visitors entering the clinic during the pandemic will wear a face mask. This can be a home-made face mask, or a disposable surgical mask. Patients are encouraged to bring their own mask, or to purchase a mask from reception.
- All staff are to wear a surgical face mask inside the clinic at all times. All clinical staff interacting with patients will wear fit-tested and fit-checked N95 and eye protection.
- Masks must be used in accordance with best practice and education around this is to be provided to all staff.
- Staff are to wear eye protection and gloves when either undertaking surface cleaning or interacting closely with patients.
- Clinical GP's are encouraged to undertake quantitative P2 mask fit-testing (provided through the DD&WM PHN) so the Practice can supply the most appropriate PPE for high-risk situations.
- Clinical PPE will be used as per Attachment A.

The Covid-19 Pandemic and response situation is fluid. The most up to date information and Public Health directive can be found at:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/public-health-directions>



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Attachment A: Clinical Response to Covid-19 Risk

Low risk

- All patients with any infectious symptom are seen via telehealth.
- Patients without any infectious symptoms will be seen in clinic for all routine cares (e.g. health assessments, cervical screening, skin checks) providing they can show proof of current vaccination, positive Check In Qld status and are wearing a surgical (or equivalent) mask.
- Aerosolising procedures will not be undertaken (e.g. nebuliser or lung function testing) for any patients.
- All patients in the clinic will sanitise hands prior to entry
- All patients will wear a face mask for the duration of the visit. Children under 5 do not have to wear a facemask.
- Staff will wear a face mask at all times inside the clinic.
- Clinical staff when interacting with patients will wear fit-tested and fit-checked N95 and eye protection.
- If a GP needs to assess a patient with infectious symptoms this will be undertaken where possible in the carpark (or Pony room) with full PPE precautions (i.e. googles, visor, P2 mask, gown and gloves with RN assistance with donning and doffing).
- Practice cleaning as per Covidsafe plan. Reception to pay attention to regular sanitising of 'high touch' points such as door handles. Clinical staff to use Viraclean on any surfaces touched by staff or patients after each episode of care.
- All non-essential soft furnishings to be stripped from waiting areas and rooms to facilitate easy surface cleaning.

Moderate risk

- All patients with any infectious symptoms are seen via telehealth
- Routine visits are ethically rationed (e.g. health assessments, cervical screening and skin checks may be rescheduled) to limit patient flow through clinic.
- Patients without any infectious symptoms will be seen in clinic for all routine cares (e.g. health assessments, cervical screening, skin checks) providing they can show proof of current vaccination, positive Check In Qld status and are wearing a surgical (or equivalent) mask
- Aerosolising procedures will not be undertaken.
- All patients in the clinic will sanitise hands prior to entry to clinic.
- All patients and staff will wear a face mask while inside CCFP rooms. Children under 5 do not have to wear a face mask.
- GPs are required to wear fit-tested and fit-checked N95 masks and eye protection when interacting with patients.
- Only patients who have been requested to attend the clinic will be allowed inside the clinic. Children are allowed one carer.
- If a GP needs to assess a patient with infectious symptoms this will be undertaken where possible in the carpark (or Pony room) with full PPE precautions (i.e. googles, visor, P2 mask, gown and gloves with RN assistance with donning and doffing).
- Practice cleaning as per Covidsafe plan. Reception to pay attention to regular sanitising of 'high touch' points such as door handles. Clinical staff to use Viraclean on any surfaces touched by staff or patients after each episode of care.
- All non-essential soft furnishings and reusable products to be stripped from waiting and consult rooms (e.g. books, bed linens, cushions).

High risk

- Consults are limited to telehealth only.
- Front door to clinic will be locked and intercom used for all interactions with patients/public.
- Patients to be seen in clinic only as absolutely crucial at discretion of treating GP and on discussion with Practice Principals.
- GPs may choose to log in remotely to clinic to work.
- Practice cleaning as per Covidsafe plan.
- Support staff to be rotated through clinic every two weeks.
- If a GP needs to assess any patient with infectious symptoms this will be undertaken where possible in the carpark (or Pony room) with full PPE precautions (i.e. googles, visor, P2 mask, gown and gloves with RN assistance with donning and doffing).