

# A message from the ACT Chief Health Officer

Dr Kerry Coleman



10 January 2021

Dear colleagues

## **Changes to managing COVID-19 cases, contacts and exposures**

In response to rising COVID-19 case numbers here in the ACT, we have made some important changes to how we manage positive cases, their household contacts and people who have been exposed to COVID-19.

These changes will help us focus on those with the highest risk of contracting COVID-19 and those most at risk from the effects of COVID, which includes people in hospital, aged care and people who are vulnerable to severe disease.

### **People diagnosed with COVID-19 and their household contacts**

People diagnosed with COVID-19 must isolate for seven days from the date they were confirmed positive and before leaving isolation they must be cleared by a medical officer. They must notify all household members of their diagnosis, as well as any social contacts they've had in the two days prior to developing symptoms or testing positive.

Household contacts must take a PCR test, the standard COVID-19 test used in ACT testing clinics, or a Rapid Antigen Test as soon as they become aware. They must also complete an online declaration form and quarantine for seven days from the date of the first positive household case.

### **Levels of exposure**

We will no longer classify people as close or casual contacts and will instead identify the level of exposure they may have had to COVID-19. These levels will now be classified as high, moderate or low risk. Each level has certain requirements to help reduce the spread of the virus.

#### **High risk exposure**

High risk exposure applies to a person who has spent a long period of time with someone diagnosed with COVID-19. For example, if they stayed overnight at this person's house, spent the evening with them indoors at home or interacted with them closely without wearing a mask.

People with high risk exposure should quarantine for seven days from the last date of exposure (although this is not mandatory). They must take a PCR or Rapid Antigen Test as soon as possible followed by another test on day six.

#### **Moderate risk exposure**

This level of exposure applies to someone who has spent some time with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. For example, they may have had dinner out together or met at a club or bar.

People who fall under this classification are asked to take a Rapid Antigen Test as soon as possible after becoming aware of the exposure, with a second Rapid Antigen Test to be taken on day six.

#### **Low risk exposure**

Low risk exposure applies to people who have spent a very brief period or distanced contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19. An example of this includes an outdoor walk together

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or attendance in the same public setting. In this instance they are asked to monitor for symptoms.

As a community we need to continue to learn, adapt and live with COVID-19 as we do other infectious diseases. As case numbers increase, each of us will need to play a role in minimising the spread of COVID-19.

As always, please continue to practise your COVID safe behaviours, including wearing a face mask indoors, washing your hands regularly, working from home where possible, and keeping your distance from people you don't know where possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Coleman", written over a horizontal line.

**Dr Kerryn Coleman**

ACT Chief Health Officer  
ACT Health Directorate

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