

COVID-19 Pathways of Care

Summary for General Practice

February 2022



Introduction

The following COVID-19 pathways of care summary provides details of the Queensland Health patient-initiated COVID-19 care for General Practitioners.

The model provides pathways for people who seek advice for treatment of COVID-19 following a positive polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, rapid antigen test (RAT) or feel unwell with COVID-19 symptoms. The model commences with the patient engaging in a risk assessment of their choice, the outcome of which streams the patient's clinical risk (low, medium, high or emergency) and directs the patient to the appropriate level of care.

The patient-initiated COVID-19 care model is person-focused and aims to improve the healthcare experience by providing the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

For severe symptoms (such as worsening breathlessness, chest pain or tightness) phone 000 and inform QAS of COVID positive status of the patient.

COVID-19 Pathways of Care

The patient-initiated COVID-19 pathways of care model features include:

- An expanded triage system and virtual care model to better manage demand and resources.
- People with COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms complete a 'health needs check' and get directed to one of four care pathways.
- People can check their symptoms and access the care they need.

Patient-initiated risk assessment options

1. Queensland Health COVID Care Self-Checker

The online Queensland Health COVID Care Self-Checker is a survey seeking more information regarding risk factors and symptoms for people to opt into and following completion provides advice regarding care needs. The Queensland Health COVID Care Self-Checker survey can be accessed by any person via the Queensland Health website here: [COVID care self-checker | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/covid-care-self-checker). People who register their positive COVID-19 result on the RAT register will also be prompted to complete the Queensland Health COVID Care Self-Checker survey.

The Queensland Health COVID Care Self-Checker survey asks:

- if they are experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms (based on the National Adult and Paediatric COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce Guidelines and advice from Queensland Health clinicians)
- their age group

- vaccination status
- pregnancy status
- if they are living in a remote location
- any concerns about accessing care at home
- the date their symptoms commenced.
- if they are suffering from any health condition
- undergoing treatment that would lower their ability to fight infection
- if they identify as Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander
- if they usually require assistance with activities of daily living.

Queensland Health will capture the data from the Queensland Health COVID Care Self-Checker survey via a dashboard. The dashboard will be accessed by Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) to follow up and assess patients and allocate them to an appropriate care stream.

2. Billie the Bot / Digital Assistant telephone survey

The Billie the Bot / Digital Assistant is a digital assisted telephone survey that seeks more information regarding risk factors and symptoms and following completion, provides advice regarding care needs. The Billie the Bot / Digital Assistant telephone survey can be accessed by any person calling 1800 953 919 (adults) or 1800 845 298 (children to age 16 years). The number is located on the Queensland Health website here: [COVID care self-checker | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/covid-care-self-checker) Following completion, the Billie the Bot / Digital Assistant telephone survey results in either a:

- Self-Care at Home SMS
- High Care SMS with an option to proceed to the more detailed online survey (the Queensland Health COVID Care Self-Checker: [COVID care self-checker | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/covid-care-self-checker) OR
- Advice to phone an 1800 number for the option of completing the further information survey via a digital assistant. For people who require further assessment and do not have a mobile, there will be no SMS and no outbound service to a landline, only a voice message to direct them to undertake the online survey [COVID care self-checker | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/covid-care-self-checker).

People who register a positive COVID-19 result on the RAT register will also be prompted to use the Billie the Bot / Digital Assistant telephone survey if they prefer this over the online Queensland Health COVID Care Self-Checker. Additionally, the Billie the Bot / Digital Assistant telephone survey option may also be more suitable for people with low vision.

Queensland Health will capture the data from the Billie the Bot / Digital Assistant telephone survey via a dashboard. The dashboard will be accessed by Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) to follow up and assess people marked as high-risk and allocate them to an appropriate care stream.

3. Healthdirect Australia Living with COVID-19 service

The Healthdirect Australia Living with COVID-19 service is an inbound triage and assessment service to people with COVID-19, or those with suspected COVID-19, accessed by phoning 1800 020 080 to speak with Healthdirect Australia. Information about the Healthdirect Australia Living with COVID-19 service can be accessed [via their website](#). The initial call may be answered by a non-clinical customer service operator; however, the call will be transferred to a clinical customer service operator where required.

The Healthdirect Australia Living with COVID-19 service offers an interpreter service for those people where English is not their first language.

The Healthdirect Australia Living with COVID-19 customer service operators ask questions about symptoms, risk factors and comorbidities, working through the risk stratification tool as per the National Guidelines (for both adult and paediatric consumers). The risk stratification process will identify the consumer's risk of deterioration as either Low risk, Medium risk, High risk or Very High risk (which requires emergent care from Triple Zero (000)). For Queensland, the agreed risk stratification is:

- Low risk - the person is advised that they are likely to be able to manage their condition at home.
- Moderate Risk - the person is advised to contact a doctor within 24 hours. A notification will be sent by secure messaging to the general practitioner for those people who consent and provide their GP's details. The GP notification does not imply medicolegal responsibility, as it is a notification and not a clinical referral.
- High Risk - the person is advised that because of their symptoms and risk factors, there is a risk of developing a more serious illness. They are advised to monitor their symptoms closely, and that a healthcare provider from Queensland Health will be in contact in the next 24 hours.

Queensland Health will capture the Healthdirect Australia Living with COVID-19 service inbound triage and assessment service data via a dashboard. The dashboard will be accessed by Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) to follow up and assess people marked as high-risk and allocate them to an appropriate care stream.

Patient journey outcomes from the risk stratification process

1. Low risk - self-care at home

People who answer the questions from the online Queensland Health COVID Care Self-Checker survey, the Billie the Bot / Digital Assistant telephone survey or the Healthdirect Australia Living with COVID-19 service and have no risk factors identified are advised that they can self-care at home.

They are prompted to access information about managing their symptoms by visiting [Managing your symptoms | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](#) and receive no further communication from Queensland Health with regard to their isolation period.

2. Moderate Risk: COVID Care at Home with a GP or healthcare provider

People who contact the Healthdirect Australia Living with COVID-19 service and have risk factors identified are advised that their responses indicate a risk of developing a more serious illness, and that their symptoms should be monitored closely.

- People who have contacted the Healthdirect Australia Living with COVID-19 service phonenumber and

have been identified as moderate risk are advised to contact their GP within 24 hours.

- People's GPs are notified by secure messaging if the person has consented and provided details of their GP. The GP notification does not imply medicolegal responsibility as it is notification - not a clinical referral. Please note that the GP notification is only provided from Healthdirect Australia Living with COVID-19 service. The Queensland Health COVID Care Self-Checker and the Billie the Bot / Digital Assistant telephone survey pathways do not result in a GP notification.

All people assessed as being at moderate risk are advised that if they require further information or wish to discuss their symptoms and / or risks identified on the COVID Care Self-Checker, they should call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080. Additionally, they are advised to go to a hospital Emergency Department or call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance if their symptoms get worse, and that they can leave their home to seek urgent medical care.

3. High Risk: Management of high-risk people by HHSs

People who answer the questions from the online Queensland Health COVID Care Self-Checker survey, the Billie the Bot / Digital Assistant telephone survey or the Healthdirect Australia Living with COVID-19 service, questions and are assessed as high-risk, require hospital-managed COVID-19 services.

Hospital-managed COVID-19 services for people assessed as high risk include management in the HHSs virtual ward, admission to hospital or ICU as required.

- People considered well but at high-risk will be managed in the HHS's Virtual Ward with regular monitoring.
- High-risk people requiring closer monitoring daily will be managed in the HHS's Hospital in the Home (HITH) service with face-to-face care in their home.
- The hospital-managed COVID-19 services via a HHS Virtual Ward may employ remote patient monitoring according to patient need, practicality and availability.
- People who require hospitalisation will be managed in the hospital ward or ICU as required.

Care escalation / de-escalation between general practice and hospital-managed COVID-19 services

Escalation and de-escalation pathways are in place to ensure that the care required can be delivered, and that capacity can be managed.

As a person's healthcare needs change, they can be moved to a different care pathway, e.g., from GP care to hospital-managed COVID care, or back from hospital-managed COVID care, to GP, if acute care is no longer required.

Escalation business rules have been developed, with each HHS customising these rules to suit their local environment. Please find the escalation diagram [here](#).

For severe symptoms (such as worsening breathlessness, chest pain or tightness) phone 000 and inform QAS of COVID positive status of the patient.

Referral and discharge process

When care needs to be escalated from GP to hospital-managed COVID-19 services, a phone call handover

from the GP to the virtual ward/COVID-19 hospital service is expected, followed by a referral via secure messaging methods.

HealthPathways contains localised referral information. HealthPathways are available at the Queensland portal site URL: <https://qld.healthpathwayscommunity.org/>

To support the referral and transfer of care process, the Queensland General Practice Liaison (QGPL) Network has developed a [Referrals and transfer of care processes between General Practitioners and HHSs for COVID-19](#) document.

When a person is considered suitable for discharge from an HHS hospital-managed COVID-19 service / HHS virtual ward to self-care at home, transfer of care communication is provided to the person's nominated general practitioner via a discharge summary.

The transfer of care / discharge summary provided will detail either non-complex or complex patient with follow up recommendations to the GP as indicated.

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What happens if I get COVID?



Call Triple Zero (000) or go to hospital if you have/or are:

- difficulty breathing even when moving around your home
- suddenly finding it hard to breathe or your breathing has gotten worse
- coughing up blood
- significant chest pain
- collapsing or fainting
- feeling cold and sweaty, with pale or blotchy skin
- a rash that looks like small bruises or bleeding under the skin and doesn't fade when you roll a glass over it
- feel agitated, confused or very drowsy
- stop peeing or peeing much less than usual.

If you test positive to COVID-19 or you've got COVID-19 symptoms and are waiting for your results, complete the online COVID Care Self-Checker at www.qld.gov.au/health/covid-self-checker or call the National Coronavirus Helpline 24/7 on 1800 020 080. Call the helpline if you want to talk to a person about you or someone you care for. Interpreters are available.

You will be told the right type of care for you:



Get well at home

- Monitor symptoms daily



Get COVID Care at Home

- You will need to call your GP or primary healthcare worker
- Stay at home and have telehealth appointments with a nurse, GP or healthworker



Get COVID Care at Home from a Virtual Hospital

- Stay at home and the virtual hospital will call you
- Health staff will manage your care remotely
- Medical monitoring devices may be sent to you
- Call your hospital health worker if you get worse



You will need emergency medical care

- Told to call Triple Zero (000) or go to hospital

Managing your symptoms at home



Monitor your symptoms daily



Get lots of rest



Drink plenty of fluids



Take paracetamol or ibuprofen

Further information

National Coronavirus Helpline 1800 020 080



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