



# Practice Connect

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Special Edition

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### New orders and reorders of surgical masks now distributed by post

To assist busy general practices and to reduce the risk of community transmission of COVID-19, all mask distribution is now occurring via Australia Post.

We appreciate supplies within some practices are running low and we are doing our utmost to expedite this process.

We can confirm that all outstanding orders will be posted this week, with one box of 50 surgical masks allocated per practice.

We continue to receive supplies of surgical masks from the Australian Government Department of Health so please continue to order and re-order via the links below.

#### General Practice, Pharmacy & ACCHO (only)

For first time requests, complete this form: [Surgical mask registrations form](#)

For a repeat order, complete this form: [Surgical mask re-order form](#)

Practices can contact their WA Primary Health Liaison Officer or contact Practice Assist on 1800 227 747 or [practiceassist@wapha.org.au](mailto:practiceassist@wapha.org.au) for further assistance.

## Expansion of telehealth services for COVID-19

From 23 March 2020, the Australian Government will enable all vulnerable general practitioners and other vulnerable health professionals who are currently authorised to use telehealth item numbers, to use telehealth for all consultations with all their patients. This change will help protect the most vulnerable members of our health care workforce, while allowing them to continue to provide much needed medical care and advice to their patients.

This includes health care providers who are:

- Aged at least 70 years old.
- Indigenous and aged at least 50 years old.
- Pregnant.
- A parent of a child under 12 months.
- Immune compromised.
- Have a chronic medical condition that results in increased risk from coronavirus infection.

Read the full announcement [here](#).

## COVID-19: Telehealth soon delivering whole of population model of care

The Australian Government has announced the temporary MBS telehealth and phone items for COVID-19 will soon be expanded to enable greater access to telehealth and phone services for people with or without COVID-19.

This will also include mental health and allied health consultations.

Currently, health practitioners at risk of COVID-19 and patients at risk of COVID-19 are eligible for the temporary COVID-19 telehealth and phone MBS items.

It is expected a more comprehensive telehealth whole of population model of care and the detail of telehealth operations via phone and video will be announced by the end of this week, as part of a staged approach to create a more responsive and flexible Medicare system that meets the needs of patients and providers during this crisis.

We will continue to communicate and support general practice through the changes as they come to hand. For further information visit [www.mbsonline.gov.au](http://www.mbsonline.gov.au).

## COVID-19: Telehealth and MBS items update for rural GPs webinar

RACGP WA, Rural Health West and WA Primary Health Alliance invite you to participate in a webinar on Wednesday 25 March, 7:00pm to 8:00pm (AWST).

This webinar will include:

- an update on the temporary Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items for video (telehealth) and phone consultations, recently introduced in response to the COVID-19 outbreak
- the telehealth consultation – a rural GP perspective
- an update on the HealthDirect Video Call program

Please click here to [register for this webinar](#).

[WWW.PRACTICEASSIST.COM.AU](http://WWW.PRACTICEASSIST.COM.AU)

## New COVID clinics open

A new COVID clinic opened in Armadale yesterday and Rockingham on Tuesday 24 March, with further clinics opening in Midland and Joondalup today.

Clinic staff will conduct tests, provide information and refer people for appropriate treatment if required.

Clinics are not intended to replace the medical care available through their GP or at hospital emergency departments.

Read the full announcement (including locations and opening hours) [here](#).

## Update: 2020 Influenza Vaccination Program

The Communicable Disease Control Directorate (CDCD) has announced that ordering for people aged 65 years and over is now open. Fludax® Quad is the only vaccine that is recommended for people aged ≥65 years.

Ordering for all other age cohorts will be available from early April.

Refer to the updated [WA Immunisation schedule](#) for 2020 influenza vaccine information.

Influenza vaccination will be state funded in WA for primary school aged children as per the updated WA schedule.

Optimal protection against influenza occurs within 3 to 4 months following vaccination. Providers should consider vaccinating in May and early June to ensure optimal protection throughout influenza season which typically spans July to October in WA. While the influenza virus remains in circulation, it is never too late to immunise.

### Recording in the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)

AIR is the national whole-of-life Immunisation register and all vaccines administered, including influenza vaccine, should be recorded in AIR, irrespective of the patient's age.

### Ordering Information:

Providers will be informed through the on-line ordering system, and by fax and email, once ordering opens. Refer to information within the [Toll on-line ordering system](#) for queries and messaging.

## Supporting your patients to access influenza vaccinations

In recognition of the evolving general practice environment, we are working with WA Health and the Communicable Disease Control Directorate to support you to provide your patients with to access to important influenza vaccinations.

Our practice support staff will soon be in touch to ascertain how your practice will be managing flu vaccinations during the coming season.

## Supporting patient mental health during COVID-19 through PORTS

Worrying about diseases is a normal reaction. But, excessive worrying about infectious diseases can affect both physical and mental health.

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, your patients may experience heightened stress, anxiety, or other mental health concerns.

PORTS provide online and telephone psychological services to WA residents, 16+ years, with symptoms of low mood, depression, stress, anxiety, or substance use problems. GPs can refer patients to PORTS to receive expert assessment and treatment. PORTS can be accessed by people who are affected by COVID-19 and are experiencing stress and anxiety.

For further information please visit [ports.org.au](https://ports.org.au) or the [PORTS COVID-19 information page](#).

## The Advance Project: Better primary health care through team-based initiation of advance care planning and palliative care

**The Advance Project** is a free, evidence-based toolkit and training package specifically designed to support GPs, nurses and practice managers to initiate advance care planning conversations and assess patients' and carers' palliative and supportive care needs.

WA Primary Health Alliance is working with HammondCare to support Western Australian general practices to implement a team-based approach to initiating advance care planning and palliative care into everyday clinical practice.

For further information please contact The Advance Project Lead, Roseanne Adamson via mobile on 0418 636 753 or by email [Roseanne.Adamson@wapha.org.au](mailto:Roseanne.Adamson@wapha.org.au). Alternatively, please contact your WA Primary Health Alliance facilitator or Primary Health Liaisons.

Please click here to view [The Advance Project Toolkit](#) flyer for further information and resources.

## St John of God Raphael Services: Improving access to free counselling for new parents in Perth

### A safe place to talk

Pregnancy and parenthood can put significant stress on new parents. It isn't uncommon for anxiety and depression to disrupt parent-baby relationships, wellbeing and family life.

Raphael Services is part of the outreach arm of St John of God Health Care and provides services to all patients, and not just privately insured patients. Vital early-intervention counselling is offered free for mums and dads; from conception through to the child being 4 years of age, enabling mums and dads to thrive - emotionally, physically and as a family.

New parents in Perth's northern suburbs can now access free mental health treatment with the opening of two new St John of God [Raphael Services locations](#).

## My Health Record: online training and resources

The My Health Record team from WA Primary Health Alliance can assist your practice with the provision of a virtual visit to provide training on using and navigating the My Health Record system.

A copy of all relevant guides, online training and webinars are provided below to reference whilst assisting you with virtual training to your practice.

To organise a virtual visit or if you have any queries please contact the My Health Record team at [myhealthrecord@wapha.org.au](mailto:myhealthrecord@wapha.org.au).

### Webinars

This [My Health Record Overview](#) webinar will outline the types of information that are typically found in a My Health Record, as well as how to view this information and where possible, upload information. It will be useful for healthcare providers who are connected to the system and ready to start engaging with it.

This [Navigating My Health Record – Streamlining your clinical assessment](#) webinar runs you through a number of new features for clinicians giving them easier access to clinical information.

This [On Demand Training \(Training Environment\)](#) webinar will overview training environments that provide a simulation of a select number of clinical software such as Best Practice, Medical Director, Communicare, Genie and Zedmed with My Health Record.

### Online training

These [Online Training Modules](#) provide self-paced training modules with an introductory module followed by specific modules for healthcare providers across a range of healthcare settings. Users will need to create an account to access these modules.

### Guides

These My Health Record [Clinical software summary sheets](#) provide step-by-step instructions for interacting a range of clinical software with My Health Record, such as how to complete uploading and viewing tasks.

This [Practice Nurse My Health Record Training Workbook](#) gives an overview of using the My Health Record on software as well as situations and scenarios to upload information.

## ePrescribing fast tracked to help protect at-risk patients

The Australian Government will fast track the implementation of electronic prescribing to allow GPs to prepare an electronic script, potentially via a telehealth consultation.

This is then shared with the pharmacy who may then choose to deliver medicines directly where suitable, thereby reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for vulnerable patients.

The Australian Digital Health Agency is currently working with software providers to implement this function and will provide further updates in the coming weeks. ePrescribing works with eRX and MediSecure.

We will be working with the Australian Digital Health Agency to support practices and pharmacies to implement ePrescribing in clinical practice, when available.

## COVID-19: Useful links and resources

- [A3 and A4 Patient Alert posters](#) for your practice
- [Practice Assist - Medicare MBS COVID-19 Telehealth Services Fact Sheet](#)
- [COVID-19 Telehealth MBS items](#)
- [Australian Telehealth Society Quick Guide to Telehealth](#)
- [Pandemic Flu Kit](#) from RACGP
- [Practice Assist - Primary Healthcare Service COVID-19 Checklist](#): Download to ensure your practice is prepared to respond
- [Information on self-isolation for COVID-19](#)
- [Tips for coping with coronavirus anxiety](#) from Australian Psychological Society
- [Mindspot's 10 psychological tips for coping with infectious diseases](#) with practical advice to help people cope with anxiety and worry

Further information and resources are available on the [Practice Assist](#) website.

## Webinars and online training

Visit our Webinars & Workshops page at [www.practiceassist.com.au](http://www.practiceassist.com.au) for the events calendar.

### Webinars

**COVID-19 and digital technology: The roles, relevance and risks of using telehealth in a crisis**

Presented by Digital Health CRC

[Watch the webinar recording](#)

**COVID-19: Telehealth and MBS items update for Rural GPS**

Presented by RACGP, RHW and WAPHA  
Wednesday 25 March

**AAPM Forum on COVID-19**

Presented by AAPM  
Thursday 26 March

**Telehealth Item Numbers**

Presented by AAPM  
Friday 27 March

**Managing the psychological impact of COVID-19 on your staff**

Presented by AAPM  
Tuesday 31 March

**COVID-19 and Calm Efficiency in Your Practice**

Presented by Bp Premier  
Wednesday 15 April

**Immunisations and Setting up your Custom Flu Clinic**

Presented by Bp Premier  
Tuesday 21 to Thursday 23 April

### Online Training

**COVID-19 Infection Control Training**

Presented by Department of Health

**Understanding Teenage Boys**

Presented by RACGP  
Thursday 2 April

**Psychosocial Support in Cancer and Palliative Care for the Patient Video Conference**

Presented by Palliative and Supportive Care Education & Cancer Council WA  
Wednesday 8 April

**How to protect yourself and the people you are caring for from infection with COVID-19**

Infection Training Module  
Presented by Department of Health and Aspen Medical

**An introduction to telephone triage**

Presented by APNA