

DATE: Friday, 18 December 2020

SUBJECT: COVID-19 update

Please attribute to Margot Mains – Chief Executive, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

Given the current evolving COVID-19 situation on the Northern Beaches, and in line with a state directive, all Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) facilities have increased alert level from green (low) to amber (moderate) risk, effective immediately.

That means a number of COVID measures have now been re-introduced in our facilities including restrictions on hospital visitors.

Visiting sessions will remain same (11am-1pm) and (5pm-7pm) however numbers are restricted to one person per session per day in general wards. For full visitor details, please visit the ISLHD website at www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au

Amber alert also means:

- All visitors entering a health facility are required to wear a mask. This advice applies to hospital and community health settings.
- All health workers are required to wear a surgical mask if they are within 1.5m of patients
- Patients already in hospital are required to wear a mask, where possible

I urge our community to increase vigilance, be meticulous in your approach to physical distancing, hygiene and all other measures outlined by NSW Health including wearing masks on public transport and in areas where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Testing is also absolutely critical to enable us to get on top of this spread. Please remember that if you or those close to you are feeling even mildly unwell, please get tested. Early testing is crucial to getting on top of any outbreak, so please play your part.

There are more than 300 COVID-19 testing locations across NSW, many of which are open seven days a week. To find your nearest clinic visit <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/how-to-protect-yourself-and-others/clinics> or contact your GP.

Locally, anyone requiring a test can attend one of the District's assessment clinics, with locations at Wollongong, Shoalhaven and Milton Ulladulla Hospitals as well as a new Shellharbour location. The Shellharbour COVID-19 Assessment Clinic is relocating from Shellharbour Hospital to the new site in the Shellharbour City Centre on Monday, 21 December.

People attending assessment clinics are asked to wear a mask.

The community is encouraged to always check the ISLHD website for up-to-date locations and opening times - <https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/public-health-unit/infectious-diseases/covid-19-latest-advice-and-resources-4>

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

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healthdirect AUSTRALIA – providing expert health advice 24 hours a day to NSW residents – Tel. 1800 022 222

While there has not been a locally-transmitted case of COVID-19 in the Illawarra since June, the Northern Beaches situation highlights that COVID-19 is still present and we must remain vigilant.

To help stop the spread of COVID-19:

- If you are unwell, get tested and isolate right away – don't delay.
- Wash your hands regularly. Take hand sanitiser with you when you go out.
- Keep your distance. Leave 1.5 metres between yourself and others.
- Wear a mask when using public transport, rideshares and taxis, and in shops, places of worship and other places where you can't physically distance. When taking taxis or rideshares, commuters should also sit in the back.

Locations linked to known cases, advice on testing and isolation, and areas identified for increased testing can be found here: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/latest-news-and-updates>.