

MEDIA RELEASE

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COVID-19 positive patients encouraged to stay home unless they have extreme symptoms

Gold Coast residents who have recently been diagnosed as COVID-19 positive, should stay at home and follow the health advice, unless they are experiencing extreme symptoms.

Emergency departments at Gold Coast hospitals and GP clinics, have had a number of patients turn up after receiving a text message confirming their COVID-19 positive diagnosis, even though they have mild symptoms, putting an additional strain on the health system, particularly during the busy Christmas period.

Gold Coast Health Executive Director of Medical Services, Dr Jeremy Wellwood, says people should only seek emergency treatment if they have extreme symptoms of breathlessness or chest pain.

“If you receive a text message advising your COVID-19 test is positive, please do not come into hospital unless you are sick and need emergency treatment,” Dr Wellwood said.

“Once you receive your positive COVID diagnosis, a health worker will contact you via mobile phone in due course, to determine if your COVID-19 case can be managed at home or elsewhere.

“Patients can also call the Queensland Health COVID phone number on 13 42 68, or visit the Queensland Health information page for advice and support,” Dr Wellwood said.

Gold Coast Primary Health Network Board Chair, Dr Roger Halliwell, says that despite a large number of COVID-19 cases, very few patients have been sick enough to be hospitalised. Most people who are double vaccinated only have mild symptoms that can be treated at home.

“People with mild symptoms should stay home and isolate, until they get better,” Dr Halliwell said. “If a patient wants to discuss their condition with their GP, they should organise a phone consultation, but should not visit the practice, to reduce the risk of them spreading COVID-19 in the community.

“Of course, if their symptoms were to worsen, they should call an ambulance,” Dr Halliwell said.

Nineteen-year-old Gold Coast resident Aiden had his confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 on Boxing Day. When he started showing symptoms on Christmas Eve, he went for a test and cancelled the big Christmas celebrations with extended family.

Aiden is double vaccinated with mild symptoms including a runny nose and sore throat. He is staying home and isolating from his family, who are also double vaccinated, “I looked at the Queensland Health website, so I know what to keep an eye on. Now I am just chilling at home, playing video games”.

The Queensland Health website has useful information about the first steps you need to take if you receive a COVID-19 diagnosis at www.qld.gov.au

When to call an ambulance

If you become very unwell at home, please call 000 for an ambulance and tell the operator that you have COVID-19.

You need emergency care if you:

- Are so breathless you are unable to say short sentences when resting
- Suddenly find it hard to breathe or your breathing has gotten worse
- Cough up blood
- Feel cold and sweaty, with pale or blotchy skin
- Have a rash that looks like small bruises or bleeding under the skin and doesn't fade when you roll a glass over it
- Collapse or faint
- Feel agitated, confused or very drowsy
- Stop urinating or are urinating much less than usual.