

Mackay Hospital and Health Service (MHHS) COVID-19 Virtual Ward

Patient Information Sheet

What is the Virtual Ward?

The Virtual Ward allows the Mackay Hospital and Health Service to provide low risk COVID-19 positive patients with clinical support in their own home.

The MHHS COVID-19 virtual ward uses Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) for admitted patients. RPM helps you stay linked to your Doctors and Nurses while you are at home by sending your information to our clinicians through a tablet. If you are not suitable for RPM, our clinicians will monitor you by phone.

What do I have to do? How does it work?

A medical kit with equipment to enable you take your observations and complete questionnaires will be loaned to you. An Administration Officer will let you know what tasks (including frequency) you need to complete as part of your onboarding to the program. The tablet will remind you when it is time to complete your tasks.

The medical kit is for the purpose of facilitating ongoing health monitoring for the duration of your admission to the Virtual Ward. If the tablet/equipment is not returned or is used for anything other than the stated purpose, charges may apply.

How will my symptoms be monitored?

- A virtual ward team member will check in with you by video call or phone as required (usually between 8.00am and 4.30pm).
- You will be asked questions about your symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, headache, nausea/vomiting and muscle pain either through a HealthCheck questionnaire task on the MCM application or by a nurse over the phone.
- You will also be asked to take some observations such as temperature, blood oxygen level and blood pressure.
- The responses you provide through the MCM application will be monitored by the COVID-19 clinical team at the Mackay Base Hospital between 8.00am and 4.30pm. If you decide to self-initiate ad hoc observations outside of these hours they will not be reviewed or actioned unless you contact the COVID-19 Coordinator with concerns.
- If you become suddenly unwell, **call 000** and ask for an ambulance. Tell them you have COVID-19.
- If you are concerned about any change in symptoms whilst under the care of the Virtual Ward, please phone the COVID-19 Coordinator on 0460 013 198.



How long will I stay in the virtual ward?

- Once you are deemed 'recovered' you will be discharged. A discharge summary will be forwarded to your GP and you will be able to access it from your My Health Record. If requested, a copy of your discharge summary can be posted to you.
- Refer to the state guidelines for information on how long you are required to stay in isolation (<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/i-have-covid/isolation>).

Do I need to wear a mask inside my home?

You do not need to wear a mask inside your home if you live alone or other people in your home also have COVID-19. You will need to wear a mask if you are in your garden which is shared by others (e.g. if you live in an apartment and there is a common garden).

Where can I go during my isolation?

- Being isolated at home means that you must stay at home. You cannot leave to attend public places, including work, school, childcare, university or public gatherings. You cannot accept visitors in your home.
- Ask others who are not in isolation to get food and necessities for you. Advise them to leave the food items at the front door. If you order your groceries online, inform the supermarket that you are in isolation and unable to sign for delivery in the instruction box. Advise the supermarket to leave the delivery at your front door.

How can I prevent the spread of COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spread through person-to-person contact like other cold and flu illnesses. Practicing good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defense against most viruses. You should:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, including before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- Cover you cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and wash your hands
- Avoid contact with others (stay more then 1.5 metres from people)
- Avoid touching your face

Going outside

If you live in a private house, it is safe for you to go into your garden or courtyard, if you live in an apartment it is also safe for you to go into the garden but only when others are not using it, and you should wear a surgical mask to minimise risk to others.

Advice for others living with you

Others that live with you who also have COVID-19 can stay with you. The recommendation of the Queensland Public Health Unit is that those who do not have COVID-19 should wherever possible seek alternative living arrangements until your isolation period has ended. Discuss your personal circumstances with the virtual ward nurse who contacts you for advice if this is not possible.



Cleaning

To minimize the spread of any germs you should regularly wash surfaces that are frequently touched such as door handles, light switches, kitchen and bathroom areas. Clean with household detergent or disinfectant.

Managing your isolation at home

Being in isolation can be stressful and boring. Suggestions include:

- Keep in touch with family members and friends via telephone, email or social media.
- Manage your mental health - <https://www.emhprac.org.au/>
- Learn about COVID-19 and talk with others.
- Reassure young children using age-appropriate language
- Where possible, keep up normal daily routines, such as eating and exercise
- Doing things that help you relax and use isolation as an opportunity to do activities you don't usually have time for.

More information

For the latest advice, information and resources, download the official government "Coronavirus Australia" app in the Apple App Store or Google play, or join our WhatsApp Channel on iOS or Android.

PRIVACY NOTICE

Personal information collected by Queensland Health is handled in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009. All personal information will be securely stored and only accessible by Queensland Health staff and associates. Your personal information will not be disclosed to other third parties without consent.

For information about how Queensland Health protects your personal information, or to learn about your right to access your own personal information, please see our website at www.health.qld.gov.au.

Key contact information

Clinical support (on-call 24hrs per day)

Name	MHHS COVID-19 Coordinator
Telephone	0460 013 198

Technical support (Monday-Sunday 8.00am-4.00pm)

Name	MBH COVID-19 Administration
Telephone	4885 6678