

Pandemic prevention, preparation, response and recovery checklist

This checklist provides general guidance only and should be adapted to the specific pandemic and infectious agent.

Infection prevention and control

Maintain activities as outlined in the RACGP's [Infection and prevention and control guidelines](#)

Preparation

Develop a comprehensive pandemic plan tailored to the practice. Educate all team members on the plan and review the plan at least annually, or after a pandemic has resolved

Appoint an infection prevention and control coordinator who oversees the development, implementation and review of infection prevention and control policies, protocols and team member education based on risk assessment

Appoint a pandemic leader and coordinator (this/these may be the same person/people who are undertaking the role of infection prevention and control coordinator)

Identify and record team members who will/will not (or are able/are not able) to work during an outbreak, considering team members' personal situations, such as pregnancy, caring needs, health risk factors, access to safe transport

Ensure team members are up to date in their immunisations for vaccine-preventable diseases

Note: Visit the [Australian immunisation handbook](#) to read more on recommended vaccinations for healthcare workers

Maintain a team member immunisation register

Encourage all patients to remain up to date with all scheduled and recommended vaccinations

Monitor the emergence of disease outbreaks and health alerts via the [Australian Government's Department of Health and Aged Care website](#) and your state or territory health department

Note: refer to [Further resources](#) for contact details and the [RACGP website](#)

Maintain a stock of initial supplies of PPE (and identify how to obtain additional supplies as required) and ensure all team members know how to correctly 'don and doff' and dispose of PPE

Ensure your practice has triage procedures and plans in place to manage patients presenting with infectious diseases and that all team members are trained and aware of their roles

Develop a list of important local contacts, such as:

- state and territory health departments
- PHNs
- PHUs
- other general practices and other health service providers
- hospitals and pharmacies
- laboratories
- social support groups (including mental health support services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and culturally and linguistically diverse support groups and peak bodies)

Response

Response: Standby

Continue items outlined in Preparation

Monitor the situation, including active surveillance for early cases arriving locally in Australia

Establish communication channels with relevant local bodies (see Preparation)

Implement the practice's pandemic plan, proportionate to the outbreak and in alignment with emerging public health advice

Review and update the human resource management plan in response to a potential increase in patient demand or decreased team member capacity

Communicate with patients regarding any changes to the practice's operation

Consider messaging at the practice entrance, on the practice website and on the telephone answering/holding system notifying symptomatic patients whether they can/cannot enter the practice and to notify the practice by calling reception (if required)

Manage patient and team member flow through the practice to maintain physical distance

Response: Targeted action

Apply infection prevention and control activities specific to the infectious agent (as guided by expert bodies)

Conduct regular, routine environmental cleaning as appropriate and apply additional cleaning requirements specific to the disease

Determine the level of PPE and precautions (standard, droplet, aerosol) required when consulting with patients who have, are suspected to have or are at high risk of having the disease

Educate all team member on the infection prevention and control requirements relating to the disease

Educate all team members on the signs and symptoms of the disease to ensure early triage, isolation and assessment

Inform patients to remain alert for signs and symptoms of the disease and how to manage these

Provide patient education on relevant infection prevention and control measures, including:

- hand hygiene
- respiratory hygiene
- physical distancing

Identify/know your higher-risk patient groups and conduct preventative activities as necessary (eg offer vaccination [if relevant], offer telehealth appointments)

Implement triage requirements for suspected cases and/or those at high risk of severe disease

Use telehealth consultations for symptomatic patients and confirmed cases (where appropriate) or consider referral to a tertiary care provider (if appropriate)

Identify and isolate patients presenting with suspected disease – act on clinical case definitions until laboratory confirmation

Notify your PHU of positive cases as required; follow PHU advice and support

Dispose of any items potentially contaminated with respiratory or other potentially infectious secretions, such as tissues or tongue depressors, into clinical waste and dispose of appropriately

Check the vaccination status of those who have potentially been exposed and offer available vaccinations or prophylactic treatments (where appropriate)

Use the practice's clinical information system (and possibly CCTV) for assisting the PHU for the purposes of contact tracing if an exposure has occurred in the practice

Understand the clinical management and antiviral protocols (if relevant)

Note: In some cases there may be targeted antiviral prophylaxis for contacts and frontline health workers

Understand the vaccine schedule (if relevant)

Ensure an appropriate stock of vaccines (if relevant)

Include up-to-date vaccination advice in travel advice (if relevant)

Conduct regular check-ins and debriefs with team members

Recovery

Assess the impact of events on the practice and team members and implement learnings for future responses

Institute measures to support the practice team

Change patient information notices to general awareness posters

Communicate a return to business as usual with patients

Assess supplies of PPE and other equipment to ensure readiness for future events

Review the practice's pandemic plan