



Advance Physiotherapy

## **COVID-19 - Stop the spread**

- Consider advising patients to reconsider/delay treatment if they have flu like symptoms or have travelled to internationally known hot spots in recent weeks. Advance Physiotherapy staff have been advised of this. Patients booking appointments by phone will be advised of this.
- Have a supply of masks available in your clinic. We have used our supply of masks and have ordered more.
- Use preventative measures to limit the spread of virus. Advance Physiotherapy continues to comply with our regular infection control policy, as well as increasing the scope and frequency of cleaning and sanitising regimes. The procedures we follow are outlined in the document: Information on Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles, which can be accessed in full at: <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-principles-for-covid-19.pdf>. Advance Physiotherapy staff have been provided with this document.

How can I individually reduce transmission?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- and if unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people).

How Advance Physiotherapy will protect our clinics from coronavirus outbreaks

Cancellation policy – Advance Physiotherapy cancellation policy will be suspended until 30.06.2020.

Before attendance

We have developed a system, prior to attendance (phone call/SMS), to ask patients whether they've been to high risk countries or have had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 while infectious, in the 14 days before the scheduled appointment.

If the patient meets the above criteria we will:

- consider alternate methods of conducting the appointment if appropriate (e.g. telephone or tele-medicine)



## Advance Physiotherapy

- if it is not possible to conduct the appointment in an alternate way, reschedule their appointment for as soon as possible after the 14 day exclusion
- remind them they are to self-isolate at home for 14 days after they departed from high risk countries or if they have had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 while infectious
- remind them they are advised to practice social distancing if they have been overseas to a country other than high risk countries in the last 14 days
- remind them if they develop respiratory symptoms or fever to call their local GP.

The person who will assess whether or not it's safe to defer the outpatient appointment is the Advance Physiotherapy Director, Ann-Louise Scheepers.

### During attendance

Implementation of options to identify patients in the outpatient clinic waiting room, including waiting room posters, asking patients at reception whether they have been to or transited through counties listed as high risk in the last 14 days or have had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 while infectious, in the previous 14 days.

For patients who meet the above criteria:

- Advance Physiotherapy will reschedule any non-urgent consultations until after the 14 self-isolation period.
- For urgent needs, patients will be provided details of other available health services or referred to the public hospital system.

For patients who meet the above criteria within 14 days of their appointment and who do not report any respiratory symptoms or fever:

- Advance Physiotherapy will reschedule any non-urgent consultations until after the 14 self-isolation period.
- For urgent needs, patients will be provided details of other available health services or referred to the public hospital system.

For patients who meet the above criteria and who report symptoms, we will refer the patient to their local general practitioner.

Source: NSW Health COVID-19: Interim guidance for elective surgery and outpatient clinics

Can Advance Physiotherapy refuse treatment of patients, especially those who have been Coronavirus hot spots??



## Advance Physiotherapy

It is reasonable to screen any patients or staff on the basis of known coronavirus infection criteria including physical symptoms and travel to identified 'hot spots'.

On the basis of this information, you may request a patient delay attendance for 14 days or, until no longer symptomatic. For further information, we recommend reviewing the guidelines found in the AHPRA Code of Conduct for Registered Health Practitioners Section 2.4, page 4.

What will Advance Physiotherapy do if there is a patient or employee with a suspected case of coronavirus?

As advised by the Australian Physiotherapy Association, we will refer to the Department of Health Fact Sheet for information with dealing suspected coronavirus cases. This can be accessed at: <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/interim-advice-on-non-inpatient-care-of-persons-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-including-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe.pdf>

We will also contact the healthdirect helpline on 1800 022 222 to speak with a registered nurse from the Department of Health to access the most recent advice.

### Use of face masks

With the emergence of COVID-19 across many countries, there is a global shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), including surgical masks and P2/N95 respirators. As a first step in releasing PPE from the National Medical Stockpile, the Australian Government has provided a limited supply of surgical masks (1,125,000) and P2/N95 respirators (27,200) for general practices (including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services) and community pharmacies with a demonstrated need.

There is no need for the general public or health workers to wear masks unless they are dealing with symptomatic patients. Further guidance on the use of surgical masks can be found at [www.health.gov.au/covid19-health-professionals](http://www.health.gov.au/covid19-health-professionals).

Should staff or patients choose to wear a face mask during work hours or while attending our clinics, they will be supported in this decision.

### Management of Suspected Cases

To date, we have not experienced a suspected case of coronavirus in our staff or patient population. Should this occur, we will follow the following advice from the Department of Health and the Australian Physiotherapy Association:

For people with a suspected case

- Information sheet for people with symptoms
- Isolation guidance



## Advance Physiotherapy

For travellers

- Information sheet for travellers, including isolation requirements
- Isolation guidance

This document is subject to change.

Staff and stakeholders will be notified of amendments.

*We wish to acknowledge – Jacqueline Eaton for her assistance with compiling COVID-19 documentation.*