

COVID Safety Plan

35 Brewer Street/Hear Today

This document supports practices for maintaining a COVID-safe workplace and complying with public health directives (where applicable).

It covers:

1. access and patient flow
2. physical distancing
3. infection-control
4. use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
5. environmental cleaning and management
6. record-keeping
7. team management and limiting interactions in closed spaces
8. proof of vaccination
9. responding to a positive case, or close contact
10. work from home arrangement

Earbus COVID Safety Plan

This is version 1.0 - current as of: **21 February 2022**

Introduction

This plan provides Earbus staff with guidance on operating in a COVID-safe way, and helps identify and mitigate risks during the ongoing pandemic. All Earbus staff are required to be fully vaccinated in accordance with the current Health Directive.

Purpose and objectives

Earbus is dedicated to the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff, patients, contractors and visitors. In this pandemic environment, we acknowledge additional precautions are required and that these are outlined in this COVID Safety Plan. Adherence to this Plan is the responsibility of every Staff member.

1. Practice access and patient flow

To control the flow of people into and through the premises, we will:

- encourage telehealth consultations (if appropriate e.g. adult clients)
- check the temperature of each person presenting to the clinic. If the temperature registers $>37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ the person will be asked to remain outside of the clinic until further assessment can be conducted
- display information at the entrance asking patients and visitors not to enter the premises if they have symptoms consistent with COVID

- display information at the entrance outlining the requirements of entry i.e. wearing a surgical or N95 mask (or similar), have an appointment
- require all people entering the practice to don a surgical or N95 mask (or similar) [patients are asked to bring their own, but will be supplied with one if they present without a mask]
- provide access to hand-hygiene products upon entry and exit (and at appropriate locations throughout the premises), including hand sanitiser or hand-washing facilities.
- Ensure as much as practicable that patients and staff are not arriving on site at the same time
- Require visitors and staff to check in on arrival using the site QR code to assist contact tracing. A Manual register will be maintained for anyone unable to access the QR code.
- Require staff to enter the premises via the rear building entrance
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2. Physical distancing

While acknowledging the nature of audiological assessments means maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 m with a patient is not practical, Earbus will put in place physical distancing measures by:

- providing training to all staff
- taping a line on the floor 1.5 m from all people's chair/desk as a physical indicator
- ensuring the number of people per room and in the building comply with distancing directives
- minimising patient congestion in the waiting room by
 1. limiting the number of people on the premises at any one time
 2. having patients wait in their cars or on the veranda outside until their appointment time

3. Infection-control training

All members of the practice team, including GPs, nurses, and reception and cleaning staff, will undertake infection-control training.

All training will be documented and include:

- completion of Department of Health COVID-19 infection control training
- completion of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care e-learning modules on the principles of infection prevention and control

4. Use of personal protective equipment

Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is critical in limiting the spread of COVID-19. All staff at Earbus will:

- ensure standard precautions, including hand hygiene, cough etiquette and appropriate waste-management techniques, are maintained

- wear PPE as appropriate to the situation and as per advice from the WA Health Department or other applicable authorities
- dispose of all used PPE in accordance with standard procedures.

5. Environmental management and cleaning

Earbus will regularly clean and disinfect shared spaces, surfaces and communal items. We will:

- enhance air flow by opening windows and doors in shared spaces (where and when appropriate) and optimizing fresh air flow in air conditioning systems (by maximizing the intake of outside air and reducing or avoiding recirculation of air)
- Utilize HEPA air filtering systems in areas with high use (Board room and Audiology Booth)
- minimize the sharing of clinical and administrative equipment between staff members
- adhere to strict environmental cleaning as per the most current advice from the Department of Health's guidelines - Coronavirus (COVID-19) Environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for health and residential care facilities
- paper towels will be provided for families and visitors
- staff are required to have their own hand towel to dry hands and are asked to ensure it remains hygienic and safe
- clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces with detergent and disinfectant wipe/solution– using a cleaning detergent followed by a disinfectant, or a two-in-one product with cleaning and disinfecting properties
- require staff who are cleaning an area or equipment to wear fresh non-contaminated gloves, a surgical mask, and eye protection
- maintain a cleaning log

6. Record-keeping

To aid contact tracing in the event a patient, team member, contractor or any visitor to the practice tests positive for COVID-19, our practice will:

- maintain a record of all patient appointments (including recording people accompanying the patient), team member work times, and contractors/visitors to the practice, including entry and exit times
- utilize a contactless electronic system (i.e. QR code or similar) to record contact details, ensuring data is stored confidentially and securely and is only used for the purpose for which it was intended
- require staff to sign in each day using the QR code
- Maintain a Manual Register for anyone unable to access the QR code system
- maintain these records for a minimum of 28 days.

7. Team management and limiting interactions in closed spaces

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between Earbus team members, we will:

- regularly communicate with all team members regarding the requirement to not attend the work premises if they have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, regardless of how mild, and will encourage testing in line with local public health advice
- check the temperature of each staff member on commencement of work. Where the person registers a temperature >37.5°C they will not enter the premises and will be asked to seek further medical review
- require a written attestation from each staff member at the commencement of each day confirming they do not have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, have not been in contact with a confirmed case, and have not been directed to isolate
- support any team member who tests positive for COVID-19, or is identified as a close contact or is required to self-isolate – including by making them aware of their leave entitlements
- where a staff member typically works across a number of sites, minimize movement between sites by scheduling shifts at one location (where possible)
- encourage physical distancing in common areas (i.e. Boardroom), through organization of furniture, floor markings and signage
- encourage lunchbreaks to be taken outside
- stagger breaks to limit the number of people in common areas
- encourage all staff to provide their own drinking vessels and cutlery
- require all staff to thoroughly clean communal items (e.g. cutlery) immediately after use by washing with hot water and detergent
- ban the sharing of food on site (e.g. cake and dips).

8. Proof of vaccination

All staff are required to have a vaccination to COVID-19 (double and booster dose when eligible). All visitors to the premises are required to provide proof of vaccination on arrival. Clients are made aware of this requirement at the time of their booking.

NBHS Outpatients:

- all parents will be asked their vaccination status before being booked in. The Audiologist will be alerted to all unvaccinated parents.
- All unvaccinated parents need to remain outside the building until their appointment time. There are now chairs on the veranda as a waiting area. If the outside temperature exceeds 32 degrees then it is preferable to take them into the appointment immediately.
- The HEPA filter in the Audiology room needs to be turned to "boost" 30 minutes prior to appointment. It should be placed in the middle of the room (not the booth). It has a 30 square meter reach. The filter should be left on setting "1" during the appointment and return to "boost" immediately afterwards to filter the air in the room.
- The audiologist must wear a KN95 mask and ensure the parents both wear a mask OVER their nose and mouth. If parents are not wearing the mask correctly, then the audiologist must instruct them by saying "just pop your mask back over your nose thanks"

- If the appointment isn't a quick one, then the audiologist must leave the room whilst the parent settles the baby
- The audiologist needs to ensure families exit the building as quickly as possible

Earbus will reduce the number of staff on site during unvaccinated screens.

9. Responding to a positive case, or close contact

If a staff member tests positive to COVID-19, we will:

- contact the Metropolitan Communicable Disease Control (MCDC) and follow their advice
- follow the direction of the MCDC regarding cleaning of the practice
- ensure the staff member does not return to Earbus premises until they meet the criteria for release from isolation, and as instructed by the Department of Health
- assist the MCDC in contact tracing by providing records of all patients, staff members and visitors who have attended Earbus during the period in which the staff member was potentially infectious (as defined by the local public health unit).

The protocol for staff who present with symptoms is as follows:

- If staff develop the symptoms at home, they will advise their Line Manager immediately and stay home; get a PCR test and isolate as above
- Staff who have tested must be in receipt of a negative PCR test result prior to returning to work
- If staff are at work and present with flu like symptoms (including scratchy/sore throat, hoarse voice, cough, runny nose, temperature) they will leave work immediately and get a PCR test - staff must be in receipt of a negative PCR test result prior to returning to work

10. Work from Home arrangement

Work from home arrangements will be considered on a day to day basis to reduce the number of staff on site at any one time. All staff will need to attend the Brewer street premises at some point during each week to ensure cohesion and workloads are managed.

Outreach

In addition to the above Plan see Schedule A for further details on additional measures to be undertaken in relation to Earbus Outreach trips.

Newborn Hearing Screening

In addition to the above Plan see Schedule B for further details on Newborn Hearing Screening in Private Hospitals

Plan review

This plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of Earbus as well as current legislation requirements and public health directives. The plan will be reviewed on or before 1 April 2022.

Metropolitan Communicable Disease Control (MCDC) contact

Western Australia	9222 8588 or 1300 MCDCWA (1300 62 32 92)
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Further resources

RACGP

- *COVID-19 infection-control principles*
- *Managing patients who present with respiratory symptoms*
- How to don personal protective equipment
- How to remove and dispose of personal protective equipment
- Patient alert poster – Symptoms
- Patient alert poster – Masks

Federal Department of Health

- COVID-19 infection control training
- CDNA national guidelines for public health units
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for health and residential care facilities
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance on use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in non-inpatient health care settings, during the COVID-19 outbreak

Safe Work Australia

- COVID-19 Information for workplaces

Schedule A - Outreach Trips

In addition to the above, the following applies to staff returning from outreach visits:

1. Staff should not return to the Brewer Street office without a clear RAT or PCR test
2. Staff must adhere to any specific Regional policy regarding COVID19
3. The Outreach team will consist of essential personnel only

Travel:

- All staff should follow current Health directives in relation to Ride Share or Taxi travel.
- RAT/PCR test should take place at the airport prior to travel
- An N95 face mask must be worn at the airport and during flights
- Staff must refrain from eating and drinking during travel when possible to reduce mask removal in a public place and therefore minimize exposure.

Clinical work:

- Staff must wear face masks throughout the trip
- PPE (N95 facemasks and shields) must be worn when seeing children
- Current Hand hygiene protocols must be adhered to following each child seen
- Gloves must be worn for Betadine Washes, FB removal and bicarb treatment and disposed after each use
- Any adult who accompanies a child must wear a face mask or be provided with one if they don't have their own
- Children: If children are masked in schools then masks must be worn during clinic
- RAT should be retaken on a trip daily
- Earbus protocols for managing children during trips must be followed.

Positive RATS test:

- Staff must not board a flight if testing positive at the airport
- Staff must immediately isolate if test positive during the trip or if they experience symptoms

Schedule B – Newborn Hearing Screening Program

Earbus Foundation of WA program (EFWA) is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all staff and families across the private hospital Newborn Hearing Screening program (NBHS). EFWA has developed the following COVID-19 plan, which includes policies and procedures to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19, in accordance with the requirements of WA Department of Health, St John of God Hospitals (SJOGH) and Ramsay Hospitals (Ramsay).

The Hospitals covered by this plan are:

- St John of God Hospitals: Subiaco, Murdoch, Mt Lawley, Bunbury and Geraldton
- Joondalup Health Campus and Glengarry Hospital

Vaccination & sites

To prevent the spread of Covid-19, EFWA NBHS Screeners will:

- provide evidence of full Covid-19 vaccination status (2 approved doses plus booster)
- use QR codes upon entering and re-entering the hospital
- be assigned to work in one hospital site only, for the duration of this plan
- observe the WA State Government's rules regarding contact or close contact and isolate when necessary as required

RATS testing

EFWA NBHS Screeners will test for Covid-19 on the day of attendance at a hospital site using the Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) (subject to availability of RATs)

PPE

EFWA NBHS Screeners will:

- wear medical grade N95 fit tested masks when visiting hospital sites
- wear medical grade N95 fit tested masks and face shields when working face to face with families and babies
- ensure the frequency of changing above mask aligns with SJOGH and Ramsay guidelines

To ensure NBH Screeners PPE complies with Hospital health and safety guidelines:

- Hospitals will provide medical grade N95 fit-tested masks and face shields to EFWA for use by NBHS Screeners working in the wards only
- Hospitals will make fit-tested N95 masks available to EFWA NBHS Screeners.
- SJOGH and Ramsay will promptly communicate any changes to health and safety protocols relevant to the NBHS program to EFWA

Infection Control

EFWA NBHS Screeners will

- follow hand hygiene protocols as per Hand Hygiene Training and best practice protocols
- ensure all equipment used is wiped down using hospital grade disinfectant wipes prior to entry to a patient's room and after leaving the patient's room
- not share pens and/or stationary items during their interactions with families or other hospital staff
- dispose of all used ear couplers, tabs, wipes and other disposables used safely in the patient's room in the rubbish bin provided
- maintain physical distancing protocols with staff, parents and families whenever possible
- Maintain the highest vigilance with regard to personal hygiene

Responding to a positive case, close contact

EFWA NBHS Screeners will be isolated if they have been:

- In contact with a person who has been confirmed as having coronavirus
- Attended exposure sites
- Overseas
- Tested for coronavirus but not yet had confirmed results
- Have a positive diagnosis for Covid-19

If NBHS Screeners present with positive Covid-19 test results:

- They must alert their Line Manager immediately
- They must remain isolated and follow WA Department of Health guidelines for re-testing prior to return to work
- Must have a negative PCR test prior to returning to work

Staff presenting with symptoms

The protocol for NBHS Screeners who present with symptoms is as follows:

- If Screeners develop the symptoms at home, they will advise their Line Manager immediately and stay home; get a PCR test and isolate as above
- Screeners who have tested must be in receipt of a negative PCR test result prior to returning to work
- If Screeners are at work and present with flu like symptoms (including scratchy/sore throat, hoarse voice, cough, runny nose, temperature) they will leave work immediately and get a PCR test - staff must be in receipt of a negative PCR test result prior to returning to work

EFWA will notify the relevant SJOGH or Ramsay site immediately of any NBHS Screeners presenting with symptoms and/or positive PCR test results.

EFWA will upon written request from SJOGH or Ramsay provide relevant information for contact tracing purposes.

All NBHS screeners will be notified of protocols relating to this plan and will provide signed confirmation of their understanding.