

# ADVICE FOR KAMS CLINICIANS RE: COVID-19 REINFECTION

Please note: this advice is based on the latest National [CDNA Guidelines](#)<sup>1</sup> and [WA Clinician Alert #85](#)<sup>2</sup>.

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- Natural infection with SARS-CoV-2 provides some protection against reinfection; however, reinfection is possible. The level of protection provided by natural infection is not fully known but is likely to decrease over time and depends on the Variant Of Concern (VOC)
- The current VOC in the Kimberley and WA is Omicron sublineage BA.2
- Prior infection with non-Omicron variants provide an estimated 60% time-limited protection against reinfection with Omicron<sup>3</sup>
- Preliminary evidence suggests effectiveness of BA.1 infection against short-term reinfection with BA.2 is around 95%<sup>4</sup> (not clear what is meant by “short-term”)
- [HealthyWA website](#)<sup>5</sup> is currently advising the public to seek advice from health providers if people develop symptoms within 4 weeks of ending isolation
- However, WA Health has not yet provided advice to healthcare providers on what to do in these situations

## SUGGESTED INTERIM ADVICE FOR KAMS

### CLINICIANS Within 4 weeks of ending isolation

- If exposed to COVID+ person → **Not classified as a close contact**
- If develops COVID-19-like symptoms → **Consider nasopharyngeal swab for respiratory panel PCR AND COVID-19 PCR**

#### **But before ordering COVID-19 PCR, think...**

##### **...How will I interpret this result? Is it really re-infection or related to previous infection?**

- PCR would provide more valuable information than RAT
- A repeat PCR within 24h might be useful (i.e. trend of Ct value)
- Discuss Ct values and need to repeat PCR with ID/Micro

##### **...Is it going to change my management?**

- Symptomatic people should stay home anyway while unwell to protect others
- Knowing this person’s COVID-status can be useful **if they are eligible** for medication
- If they are not eligible for medication anyway, will your management change?
- Consider their medication eligibility before ordering the COVID-19 PCR test

##### **...What are the implications of mandatory isolation for this person?**

- If they test positive, they will have to follow the [legal direction](#) of minimum of 7-day isolation
- What are the implications of the legal requirement of isolation on this person’s circumstances? E.g. Consider risk of domestic violence, urgent pre-arranged travel plans, hx of mental illness, risk to other members in the household...

### After 4 weeks of ending isolation

- If exposed to COVID+ person → **Follow [close contact](#) protocols**
- If develops COVID-19-like symptoms → **Test with RAT or PCR → if positive, treat as a [NEW CASE](#)**

## REFERENCES

1. CDNA. COVID-19 Series of National Guidelines Version 7.0. 2022 <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-novel-coronavirus.htm>
2. WA Health Department 2022. [WA COVID-19 Clinician Alert #85](#)
3. Altarawneh HN, Chemaitelly H, Hasan MR, Ayoub HH, Qassim S, AlMukdad S, et al. Protection against the Omicron Variant from Previous SARS-CoV-2 Infection. N Engl J Med. 2022;386(13):1288-90.
4. Chemaitelly H, Ayoub HH, Coyle P, Tang P, Yassine HM, Al-Khatib HA, et al. Protection of Omicron sub-lineage infection against reinfection with another Omicron sublineage. medRxiv. 2022:2022.02.24.22271440.
5. HealthyWA website. [https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Coronavirus/Managing-COVID19-at-home-and-in-the-community/After-COVID19](https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/Managing-COVID19-at-home-and-in-the-community/After-COVID19)